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TAMIL Information

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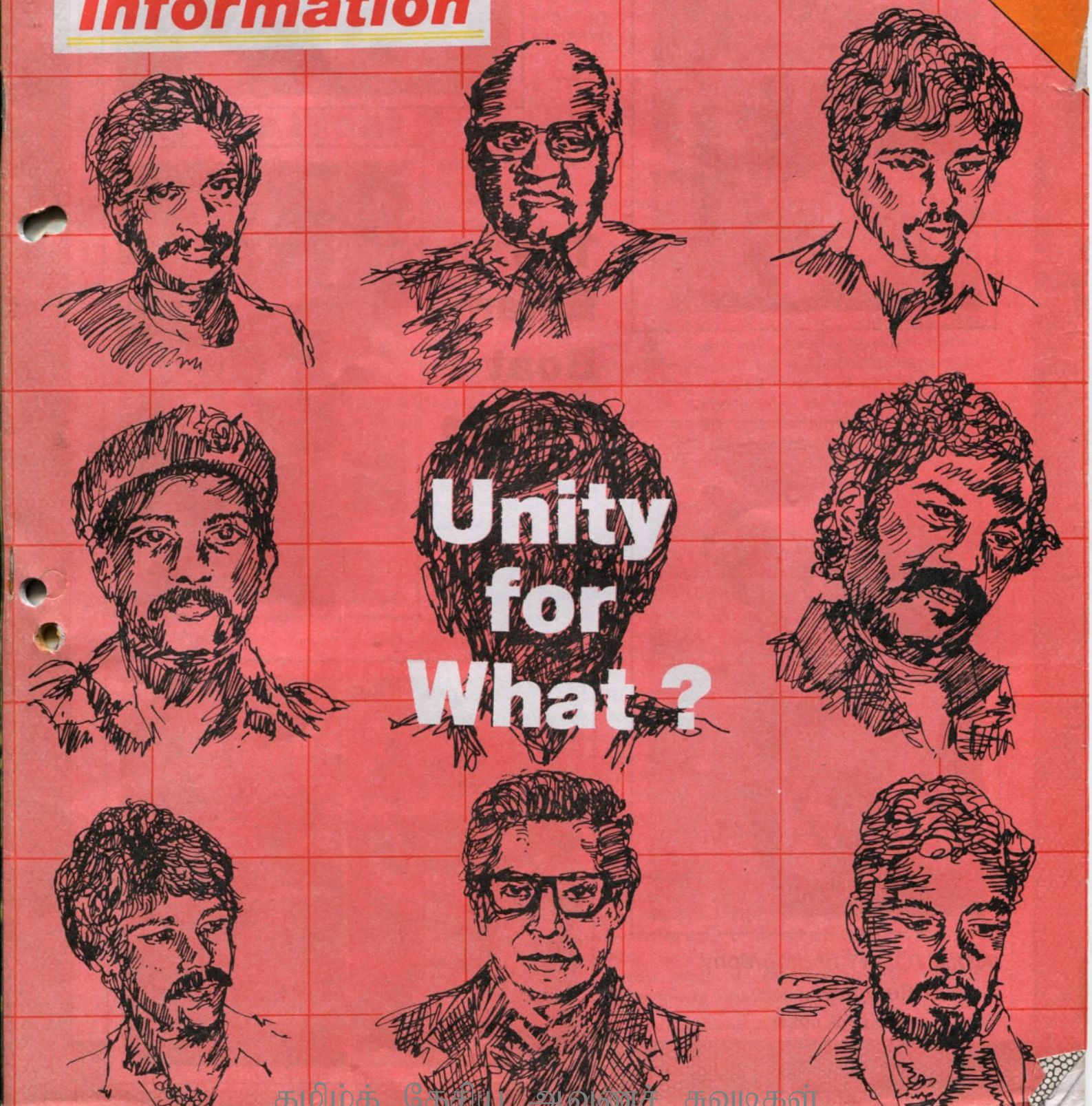

Unity for What ?

தமிழ்த் தேசிய ஆவணச் சுவடிகள்

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February – March 1985

The Eelam Boat People

INDIA TODAY photography
– Boat Refugee –
Text on Inside back cover

தமிழ் இணைய நூலகம் - சென்னை

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TAMIL Information

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Unity for What ?

If there is one word that has been over-worked in the Tamil Eelam liberation vocabulary- that word is UNITY. But tragically enough, it is lack of unity that has brought about the degradation and downfall of the Tamil man, and it is the same lack of unity that had been retarding the Tamil liberation struggle until now. How was it that if the word has been so over-worked, that if the thought had been ever-present in everybody's mind, that if making unity moves had been a constant pre-occupation and pastime to many people in Madras, that all these ended up in nothing over the last one and a half years ? The reasons are many, but one deserves to be pinpointed straightway. The Tamils have yet to understand the difference between WORDS and DEEDS, between PRONOUNCEMENTS and PERFORMANCE. The politicians, by the very nature of their calling are wholesale dealers in WORDS. So are the media men. Most people abandon all original thinking in the face of this powerful tandem.

The trouble about unity is that it is just not a word. There are words in every language which are soothing. In the English language there are words such as PEACE, HARMONY, GOODWILL and UNITY. Very soothing words. People use these words liberally; so do governments and politicians, because these are words to which no son of a mother can take objection. Can you find a single man, outside mental asylums perhaps, who would openly stand up and say that he was opposed to peace or harmony or goodwill or unity ? So why is this big, wide world suffering from this very affliction — the absence of peace, harmony goodwill and unity ? The answer is simple. Firstly, people do not always say what they mean, nor mean what they say. Secondly, what one man "X" means by unity might not be the same as what "Y" means by it. Or take motives; for example the case of the Spider and the Fly in that old verse —

"Will you walk into my parlour ?"
Said a spider to a fly;
"Tis the prettiest little parlour
That ever you did spy".

That was in fact an invitation to unity ! If the fly declined the invitation, did it mean that he was opposed to the idea of unity ? Yet, many Tamils in Madras would have blamed the fly for not accepting the invitation (and ending up inside the spider) because after all the spider was so conciliatory!

Not only is unity not a mere word, it is not a pious wish; or an expression of hope or a manthram. Any unity move should not only have a genuine motive, but it should be framed for a clear-cut, purposeful objective based on agreed means of achieving that objective. What purpose does it serve if you try to bring together a man who is hell-bent in going to Antarctica in April, another who has made plans to climb Mount Everest in May and a third man who says he wont be parted from his family until 1988 !

Unity for WHAT ? That is the question to be answered, and answered honestly. TAMIL INFORMATION welcomes with both arms the latest move to bring unity among Eelam liberation forces, because of all the attempts made over the last one and a half years, this is the only move that has LOGIC behind it: Let all the militant groups and other open forces that had been ACTIVE in the liberation process GET TOGETHER. There is not only logic but credibility in it. And that unity is here now ! The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, which had been the one group that had consistently kept the State terrorist forces at bay and helped to preserve the self-respect of all Tamils, the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation that had recently shown marvellous striking capacity and shown itself capable of taking on the Sri Lanka army in open combat, the EROS and EPRLF which despite differing theoretical perceptions on the over-all Eelam liberation struggle exhibited great magnanimity and sense of purpose in linking up with TELO in a common front, are well on the way to getting together for united action. May this unity go from strength to strength and may this mean the dawn of liberation for the oppressed people of Tamil Eelam!

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DECCAN HERALD

BANGALORE, MONDAY, MARCH 25, 1985 CITY

Tamil militant groups unite

MADRAS, March 24. — The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, one of the oldest and the most powerful among the guerilla groups fighting for a separate State for Sri Lankan Tamils, has decided to join the Eelam National Liberation Front after protracted negotiations.

The decision, coinciding as it does with Foreign Secretary Romesh Bhandari's three-day visit to Colombo from today, is intended not only to broadbase the front and give it the necessary military teeth but also to signal to the Sri Lankan Government that it cannot seek a lasting political settlement behind the back of the militants.

The Tigers' decision to join the front is a shot in the arm for the ENLF which was formed about a year ago by the Eelam Research Organisation (EROS), its splinter the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Organisation (ERPLF), and the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO). The EROS and the ERPLF comprise mostly left-wing political activists engaged in mobilising the people and have only small armies of their own. Only the TELO can match the LTTE in military structure.

Since the formation of the front, EROS leader Balakumaran and EPRLF chief Padmanabha had been wooing the LTTE of Prabhakaran and the other equally well-organised group, the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) of Uma Maheswaran, but the moves to rope these two into the front failed to bear fruit for so long because of the rivalry between Uma Maheswaran and Prabhakaran.

PUBLIC CLASHES: Uma Maheswaran, chairman of the LTTE for a year from 1978 broke away and formed the PLOTE after what he called ideological differences with Prabhakaran. Since then, there have been periodic clashes between boys of the two groups, the most serious being the shoot-out outside the Eelam Information Centre in Madras about ten days ago. This incident, played up by the Lankan radio, caused a serious setback to the unity moves then underway between the two groups.

Even now, the Tigers acknowledge that the PLOTE is an important group which cannot be left out of any front. At the same time, they say Uma Maheswaran has lost his credibility with the other groups by "hobnobbing with the TULF" which had failed to fulfil the overwhelming mandate it had secured in 1977 for a Tamil Eelam. By isolating the PLOTE for a while, Uma Maheswaran can be made to agree to sever links with TULF, give a commitment that he will not accept any settlement short of self-determination for the people of "Eelam" and deploy his forces in the struggle. The group pressure will also make the PLOTE discipline its trigger happy "commanders" who often harass boys of the other groups.

The immediate reason for the Tigers' decision to join the front and strengthen it is the realisation that time is running out for militants and that they must consolidate their forces. As Dr. A.S. Balasingham, political adviser of Prabhakaran put it, "protracted guerilla warfare in the face of accelerating State terrorism" is leading to terrible loss of innocent civilian lives. Over 60,000 have come to India as refugees."

By forging a united front, the militant organisations hope to get official recognition from India sooner or later. This they are optimistic of securing once they are able to convince India that their is not just a separatist movement on the lines of the ones in Punjab or Nagaland but a struggle against genocide and violation of basic human rights.

JAYEWARDENE'S MOVE: The militants also feel that a consolidated front stands a better chance of getting invited to the talks should they be resumed at India's initiative. President Jayewardene, even while seeking to crush the movement, has realised that he cannot seek a permanent settlement with the TULF, ignoring the militants. That was why he sent Gamini Navaratne, Editor of the Jaffna based Saturday Review and a Sinhala moderate who had been campaigning against a military solution, to Madras last December to talk to the militants. The groups told him that the Government should first prove its bona fides by pulling out the army from Tamil areas, withdrawing the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act and the emergency regulations and releasing all political prisoners. The talks could then be preceded by mutual cease-fire.

Nothing came out of the mission because India, caught in the turmoil of elections so soon after the assassination of Mrs. Gandhi, was not in a position to exert enough pressure on Sri Lankan to seek a negotiated settlement. This transisition period in India also saw increasing Lankan army attacks on Tamil civilians, declaration of the 320-km long coast from mannar in the west along the Jaffna peninsula to Mullaithivu in the east as prohibited zone, stepped up naval surveillance to choke guerilla movement across the Palk Strait, attacks on Rameswaram fishermen and the influx of another 15,000 refugees to India.

Now that there is a stable Government both at the Centre and in Tamil nadu from where these groups operate, it is felt that President Jayewardene may be amenable to Indian suggestions for reopening the talks. Indicative of the softening of the Lankan attitude is the decision to release 200 Tamil youths from army camps. There are also reports that Mr. Bhandari's visit might pave the way for a summit meeting between Mr. Jayewardene and Mr. Rajiv Gandhi. One report says that Mr. Jayewardene might stop over in Delhi on his way back after visiting Pakistan.

It was these developments which gave a fresh impetus to the moves among the militant groups to present a united front. It is too early to say how enduring the unit will be, considering the inherent contradictions in the approach of various groups. Basically, all groups are committed to achieving a separate Eelam through armed struggle. All groups are left-oriented and committed to establishing a socialistic society if and when Eelam becomes a reality.

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Dutch government freezes part-aid to Sri Lanka

The Dutch government has decided to freeze all aid meant for projects in the North and East of Sri Lanka that have remained unexecuted by the government of Sri Lanka. The east coast Fisheries project in Valaichchenai, the Mannar Water Supply scheme, three of the six poultry farms and some of the seed certification and seed production farms have been stopped. The start of a new "integrated rural development programme" in Mullaitivu has been suspended. It is believed that this step had been taken by the Dutch Ministry of Development Co-operation to ensure that no monies allocated to projects in Tamil areas are diverted to other projects in the rest of the island. Of the allocated F41 million guilders as for now, only F34 million guilders can be used.

Besides this, the Dutch government will continue to cut down on programme aid, which had shown a reduction in 1984 as compared with 1983. In 1985, there will be a further reduction.

While taking these steps, the Dutch government had however shown an ambivalent attitude on the political and human rights situation in Sri Lanka, which attitude has been strongly criticised by the "Stitching Sri Lanka Werkgroep Nederland" (The Sri Lanka Working Group, Netherlands).

It has quoted the Dutch Ministery of Foreign Affairs van de Broek as stating in a debate on the status of Tamil refugees in Netherlands, that Sri Lanka cannot pass the international standards of criticism, but found this understandable because of violence used by Tamils. The Sri Lanka Working Group Netherlands has disagreed fundamentally with the Minister on this question. Acts of militants, it states, can never be used by any government anywhere as an excuse to violate international signed agreements. The acts of the Sri Lanka government are in violation of the fundamental rights of peoples and contrary to human rights conventions adopted by Sri Lanka.

The Group has called for a complete suspension of all aid to Sri Lanka, until the government is prepared to allow an independent international investigation into the involvement of the Police, the Army and government parliamentarians into the July 1983 violence against Tamils.

Tamil Tigers' response to Lalith's threat

Anti-Eelamist settlements in spite of protests – Lalith
– The Island Page 1 Lead Headline, 13th March 1985
M'wachchiya Police Station attacked
– The Island Page 1 Lead Headline, 14th March 1985

The 13th March report said: The settlement of 200,000 persons between Vavuniya and the Elephant Pass with four months military training to protect themselves from terrorist attacks would be carried out despite opposition from certain quarters, said Minister of National Security Lalith Athulathmudali on Sunday at Pelmadulla.....

The 14th March report said: The Medawachchiya Police Station (censored) was attacked (censored) yesterday night by an armed gang who came in a vehicle (censored). The army unit stationed in Medawachchiya and policemen resting in their barracks rushed to the assistance of the police personnel. (censored). The (censored) Army Unit from Gajaba camp and police from Anuradhapura have now been mobilised to protect the police being re-attacked.

The uncensored facts were as follows: The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam launched a 3 a.m. attack on the Medawachchiya Police Station in the heart of a Sinhala area on 13th March. Nine Police Commandos were killed. The same assault party blew up a part of the Medawachchiya Railway station and some commercial establishments.

This attack which took the government completely by surprise, was intended to be a warning signal that if the government persisted with its plans to settle 200,000 armed Sinhalese in Tamil areas, the battle will be taken to the Sinhala areas, according to LTTE sources.

When President Jayawardene told the Sri Lanka Parliament some time ago, "If we dont occupy the borders, the borders will come to us", he had got hold of the wrong end of the stick. The more north the government tries to occupy forcibly, the more south the borders are bound to recede in course of time. Surely the Sri Lanka government does not like the idea of the future Tamil Eelam absorbing the Medawachchiya area as well ?

If I see Rajiv, I will speak up... —Jayawardene
...from down under.

CARAVAN February (Second) 1985

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Father of EELAM concept dies at 90

The man who fathered the Tamil Eelam concept and introduced the word EELAM into the Ceylonese political vocabulary — Professor C. Suntharalingam — died in his ninetieth year at Vavuniya on the 11th February 1985. But it is perhaps a tragic commentary on Tamilian life that the majority of the youths who are today engaged in a liberation struggle for the establishment of a Tamil Eelam have not even heard of him!

It was C. Suntharalingam who founded the Eela Thamil Ottrumai Munnani (Unity Front of Eelam Tamiis) in 1959. It is again a tragic commentary of Tamilian life that 26 years after, when Tamils in Sri Lanka are facing both individually and totally, annihilation and extinction at the hands of their own government while the rest of the world maintains the hypocritic pose that it is an internal problem, the victims themselves are unable to unite in one common defence of their lives!

In a printed leaflet, dated from Vavuniya, as far back as 16th December 1959, Mr. Suntharalingam called for a "Eela Thamil struggle for Independence" (Interestingly, the leaflet carries the name of an Indian printer — The Trichinopoly United Printers, Tiruchi 2)

There were no "Tigers" then, no guns.. no militancy, and in fact many of "our, boys" of today were probably not born or were in their cradles. Even the "Thamil Eelam resolution" of the TULF came 17 years later!

The concluding portion of the leaflet said: "In the history of Ceylon, in the shuttle-cock warfare waged over 2,000 years, the Eela Thamils never lost their kingdom entirely, except for two short periods of sixteen and six years, while for much longer periods Thamil kings have ruled over all Ceylon. History is repeating itself and must indeed repeat itself, adapted to modern conditions. When Dharma decays and Adharma prospers Providence intervenes to destroy the wicked and to protect the week. That era has dawned once more in Ceylon. Will the Eela Thamils in this hour of danger and disaster to their Nation, show their worth and their valour? Will they do their duty. UNITE AS BROTHERS IN BATTLE, and join in the Eela Thamil struggle for independence?"

Although hardly known to the present generation, the late C. Suntharalingam was a many-splendoured figure in Ceylon's public life for nearly 40 years. Back from a brilliant student career at Oxford University, he entered the Indian Civil Service, subsequently the Ceylon Civil Service, and having got tired of signing gun licenses as he then put it, resigned what was then a much sought after plum of office to accept the Vice-Principalship of Ananda College, Colombo. Soon, he was offered the first Chair of Mathematics at the Ceylon University College. Many eminent men in Ceylon's public life, both Sinhalese and Tamils, passed through his hands at the University.

His much-remembered academic career ended when he switched to politics and was elected to represent the Vavuniya seat in Parliament in 1947. He was the Minister of Commerce and Trade in the first Parliament of independent Ceylon and was dismissed from the Cabinet for not voting with the government on the Indian and Pakistani Residents Citizenship Bill.

Although a controversial politician, and sometimes a champion of unpopular causes, "Sun" was much admired for his bluntness, physical and moral courage and independence of outlook. Apart from his brilliance in scholarship and in his special field — Mathematics — C. Suntharalingam won his colours at Oxford representing his University against Cambridge at Chess.

How the Sri Lanka armed forces showed their DISRESPECT!

Mr. Suntharalingam passed away on 11th February at his residence in Vavuniya on the Kandy Road, just adjoining the Air Force camp. On the 12th, several residents had gathered to pay their last respects to the man who once represented them in Parliament. Suddenly, air force personnel, fully armed, descended on the house of mourning, insisted on searching the house, harassed the family mourners, questioned several people present and left after causing panic among those present. A daughter of the Late Mr. Suntharalingam angrily telephoned President Jayawardene to Colombo and lodged a protest. Within a few hours, a high-ranking Army officer arrived at the house, and apologised to members of the family. But that was not the end of the story. Next day, Lalith Athulathmudali, also a product of the same University, Oxford, claimed in Colombo that Air Force personnel in Vavuniya had gone in numbers to "pay their last respects" to the departed Tamil leader. It probably proves that Oxford education is not everything!

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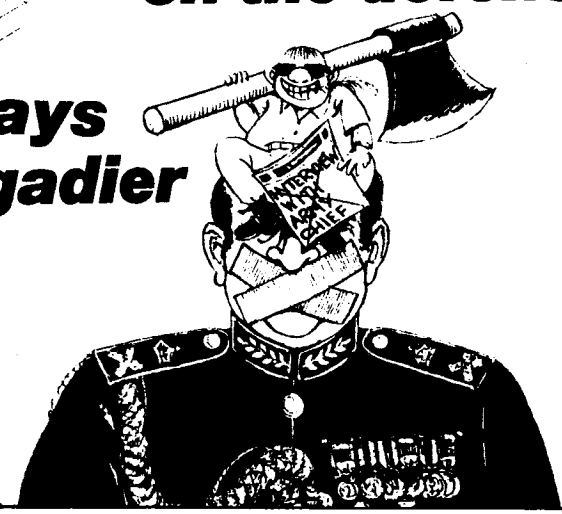
Sri Lanka Army on the defensive, says Brigadier



The following interview given to Reuters by Brigadier Wanasinghe was quite naturally censored in Sri Lanka, because it goes contrary to what the government has been telling the Sinhala people. Not knowing the contents, ISLAND cartoonist comments critically (above) on the censorship.

The Sri Lankan army is on the defensive, militarily and psychologically, in its fight against guerillas seeking an independent Tamil state in the north and east of the country, according to Brigadier Hamilton Wanasinghe, Commander of the security forces in Jaffna.

Militarily because it does not have the manpower or the equipment to smash well-armed and well-financed guerilla movement.

Psychologically because it operates in a hostile almost wholly Tamil environment and because the guerillas are having the best of the propaganda war.

"If we had more men, there would be no problem, Brig. Wanasinghe told Reuters.

"Guerilla strength is on the increase", the Brigadier said. "We do not have enough troops. We are building up but it will take a little time."

Shortage of men is only one of the weaknesses of the security forces. Officers in the north admit that the guerillas are as well equipped as their own men — and sometimes better.

Apart from one helicopter gunship, Wanasinghe said, the air force has no strike aircraft. It ferries troops to the north in a motley collection of small and obsolete transports, including 40-year-old DC-3s reclaimed from the scrap heap and reconditioned for the guerilla emergency.

"We need more gunships, and especially one with night capability", Wanasinghe said. "But even if we had them it could take up to four years to train pilots."

The army in the north, operating in hostile territory, was effectively confined to its bases. "We do not have enough troops to go on the offensive", the Brigadier said.

Mining of railway lines — 29 soldiers were killed in such an attack in January — had made the security forces dependent on inadequate air supply or foot-slogging for movement.

"Every inch of road must be checked before the troops can move", Wanasinghe said, "It's a great strain".

Army tactics are to hold their bases, moving out only in response to a guerilla attack or to raid a suspected guerilla base.

These tactics are dictated partly by shortage of troops and lack of mobility but partly also by consciousness of the bad image the army has gained through over-reacting to earlier guerilla raids.

Wanasinghe said 18 soldiers had been court-martialled and dismissed from the army for disciplinary offences but said that in most cases where civilians had been killed it was because they had been caught in cross-fire in an ambush.

He said discipline was no longer a problem. "Now the troops are seasoned."

But the army was keeping a low profile in part to reduce the risk of unnecessary civilian casualties which could be exploited by the guerillas to discredit the security forces, he said.

The case for armed military intervention by India to save the Tamils in Sri-Lanka and Eelam

1. India is rightfully proud of its action in Bangladesh which prevented a mammoth genocide, but can she be proud of the fact that by not intervening early enough she did not prevent the killing of over a million people and the rape of over a million women? This is a serious blot on the history of the Indian sub-continent. Similar guilt prevails in the west for not preventing the mass killing of 6 million Jews by the Nazis. Mere legalistic defences are not enough.

2. India is the super power of the Indian sub-continent. Indian government is responsible for a population of over 700 million people. She cannot allow small states such as Sri Lanka with a 10 million hostile population to undermine her security under the pretext of sovereignty.

3. Sovereignty of small states was a post-colonial make-shift arrangement for the withdrawal of the British Empire and this was clearly demonstrated recently in Grenada when America intervened militarily for the sake of their humanitarian concern for its own people.

4. A de facto situation already exists in Eelam which gives India the necessary legal authority to intervene on behalf of the Tamils militarily.

5. A country (Sri-Lanka) which is not governed by rule of law in dealing with its own people cannot hope to be dealt with according to law of civilized nations.

6. The blood letting and discrimination suffered by the Tamils since independence rule out any political solution within a framework of united Sri-Lanka. An independent state of Tamil Eelam within a wider framework of the United States of India is the only viable political solution.

7. If India does not act on behalf of the Tamils, no other country can take this role and fulfil this obligation.

8. Tamils are well versed in the British style democracy and they can also be expected to claim their place as a member of the Great Indian Family.

9. When the public international law (with all its deficiencies) has failed to protect the minorities in artificial small states, no one can blame India if she picked military action to save the Tamils.

10. Tamils of Eelam have their own cultural identity, language, they were their own rulers before the European sub-jugated them. Now the Tamils are facing genocide. These last points qualify the Tamils, for a separate, independent state under the United Nations governing rules.

— Dr. Nadarajah Sivagnanam

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HOW THE WORLD PRESS

(Except the Indian Express, New Delhi)

SEES SRI LANKA

Edward Behr: NEWSWEEK

"...Part of the problem is caused by the largely Sinhalese Sri Lankan Army. "They are among the most undisciplined soldiers in the world," says a Western diplomat in Colombo. "Their reaction to taking casualties is to go on the rampage and shoot anyone in sight." That is exactly what happened last August in the Tamil town of Mannar, Where Government soldiers embarked on a bloody two-hour rampage in retaliation for a guerrilla attack on a Sri Lankan Navy vessel...."

Dean Brelias: TIME

".... In the predominantly Tamil Jaffna Peninsula, at the northern tip of the island the army has imposed a daily, dusk-to-dawn, shoot-on-sight curfew. Most private vehicles have been commandeered by government troops, and civilians must have a pass to move about even during the day. Young Tamil men are routinely rounded up and tortured. Each new ambush by the separatists has led to massive retaliation by the army. Thus far 40,000 Tamil refugees have fled from Sri Lanka to the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Tamil militants say that at least an additional 20,000 refugees have entered India illegally. Young refugees are regularly recruited and sent back to fight with the Tamil guerrillas.

In the north, evidence of destruction by the military is everywhere. Temples and churches have been desecrated. In the past month, a Roman Catholic priest and a Methodist minister were gunned down by government forces. Residents say the worst savagery occurred in Mannar in December following the ambush of an army patrol by guerrillas. "The soldiers began shooting at anyone they saw, "reports one eyewitness. "People died like flies. The soldiers went out on the road, killing some people on the spot and taking others away. They went to the post office and made people line up before they shot them. Then they went looking for people in the paddy fields. No one was spared. It was a scene out of hell. "The massacre began at 11 in the morning and ended at 4.30 in the afternoon. When it was over, more than 150 people had been killed..."

NICHOLAS COLERIDGE

From The STANDARD, Monday February 18, 1985

THE HOTELS along Colombo's five-star corniche, the Galleface, make a sorry spectacle. Few of them are even half full and the swimming pools are deserted as Sri Lanka's tourist trade responds to the increasingly fierce civil war.

Once tipped as the holiday destination most likely to succeed the Caribbean for winter sun, this island, with its miles of white sandy beaches and coconut plantations, instead finds itself the likely successor to the Lebanon and El Salvador.

Since Christmas, an estimated 600 people have been killed in the northern part of the island, around Jaffna, which the Tamil minority are lobbying to have declared a separate state, Tamil Eelam.

Meanwhile, Sri Lankan armed forces, composed of Buddhist Sinhalese from the South, are running a fierce campaign to crush the rebels. There are appalling stories of random massacres, intimidation and rape.

The Sri Lankan government daily ascribes all atrocities to the Tamil Tigers the increasingly bold rebel guerrillas who operate from secret jungle bases, while everyone in Jaffna insists they are committed by rampaging Sinhalese troops.

For foreign journalists it is now a challenge even to reach the North. The railway line which linked Jaffna with the capital was blown up two weeks ago by Tamil Tigers, killing 27 government troops. There is little likelihood of it being repaired.

Jaffna airfield is closed except to military aircraft and the road is dotted with army checkpoints with instructions to turn back vehicles. Reporting restrictions have been imposed, and garages are forbidden to sell more than a few rupees worth of petrol at a time.

Since I am in Sri Lanka with a small camera crew making a documentary about the troubles, the only recourse is to pass ourselves off as tourists, blithely heading into the war zone with tubes of Ambre Solaire and several books about Ceylonese birds: the spoonbill and yellow plumed parrot are conveniently indigenous to the Jaffna region.

Although the military are ordered to repel bird-spotting holidaymakers, two decades of tourism have left their mark and they can never ultimately resist the smell of suntain cream and foreign currency.

The countryside north of Anuradh[illegible] which is as far as the coach [illegible] now venture, is fast becoming a desert. The army, intent on forming a buffer between the rebels and the South, are systematically destroying crops and clearing villages. So it is possible to drive for 50 miles and see nothing but burnt houses and military convoys.

In the Jaffna district itself there is no fuel and virtually no food. The Tamils, forbidden to fish lest they smuggle weapons across the Palk Strait from India, subsist on a diet of tinned pilchards and custard cream biscuits.

Tamil Tigers (who dress to balaclavas with tiger-skin bandannas) lay landmines along the main routes every night. So there is an understandable reluctance among Sinhalese troops to be first on the road in the morning.

Arriving an hour after curfew in Mannar, a Tamil port now under virtual state of stege, we were instantly arrested by a posse of Sinhalese militia. Their average age was about 14. ▶

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They carried Russian Kalashnikov automatic rifles and turned out to be more frightened than we were. All came from Colombo and had not been home for six months. They seemed wholly unsupervised and saw their role solely as that of baiting Tamils.

In due course they released us in exchange for a postcard of a film actress and an opportunity to try on a Dunhill wristwatch.

Three hours after we had passed through the military camp at Marunken, it was raided by 100 Tamil Tigers. Most of the stores and the perimeter fence were destroyed.

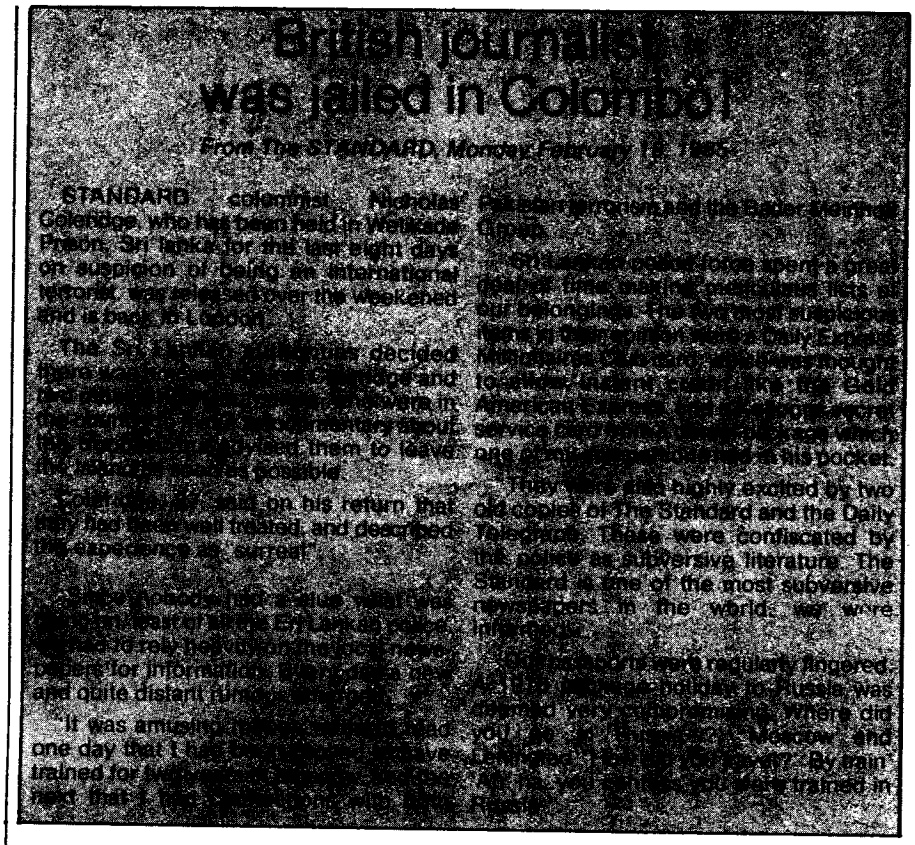
The following morning, Sinhalese retribution was swift. Three hundred troops surrounded the coastal fishing village of Vidattatium, arriving by helicopter, trucks and armoured cars and set fire to 10 homes chosen at random. They also looted anything of value under the pretext of house-to-house searches. Smoke from the blaze could be seen 20 miles away.

Six days earlier, during a raid on a neighbouring village, several women were arrested by the army and held for 72 hours. They were released, horribly molested, and 20 villagers were shot.

Outrages of this nature have become daily occurrences in Jaffna. A negotiated settlement is now reckoned out of the question and Tamil spokesmen use the word genocide freely when explaining their predicament.

Their determination for a separate state has never been stronger, despite the stream of Tamil refugees which every day leaves Sri Lanka for India, the U.S.A. and Britain.

The Sri Lankan government of President Junius Jayewardene, however, is showing an equal determination not to permit a separatist state, and continues to blame India for aiding the rebels..... ■



British journalist was jailed in Colombo!

From The STANDARD, Monday February 18, 1985

STANDARD colonist Nicholas Coleridge, who has been held in Welikade Prison, Sri Lanka for the last eight days on suspicion of being an international terrorist, was released over the weekened and is back in London.

The Sri Lankan authorities decided [illegible] and [illegible] in [illegible] about [illegible] them to leave [illegible] possible.

Coleridge [illegible] said on his return that [illegible] well treated, and described the experience as "surreal".

[illegible] had a [illegible] Sri Lankan police [illegible] to rely heavily on the local newspapers for information [illegible] and quite distant [illegible]

"It was amusing [illegible] one day that I [illegible] trained for [illegible] next that I [illegible] Pakistan terrorism and the Bader Meinhoff Group.

[illegible] police force spent a great deal of time [illegible] lists of our belongings. [illegible] Daily Express Millionaires Club card [illegible] the Gold American Express [illegible] service [illegible] which one of [illegible] in his pocket.

They were also highly excited by two old copies of The Standard and the Daily Telegraph. These were confiscated by the police as subversive literature. The Standard is one of the most subversive newspapers in the world, we were informed.

[illegible] were regularly fingered. [illegible] holiday to Russia was [illegible] Where did you [illegible] Moscow and [illegible] By train [illegible] you were trained in Russia.

Nicholas Coleridge SPECTATOR

Since I have never been inside a British jail, it is difficult to draw comparisons with a Sri Lankan one. But for hilarious bedlam I do not suppose that anywhere begins to match Welikade Prison, Colombo, where I have just spent ten days under suspicion of being an international terrorist and Communist agitator. Welikade Jail (or 'lock-up' in local parlance) is a vast and austere compound containing 1500 prisoners on the outskirts of Colombo. Attached to it is a prison hospital, designed like a series of cricket pavilions, and it was here that I and my two journalist companions were remanded. This was regarded as a 'luxury' billet, though luxury is relative; it allowed us access to a draughts board with 17 of its 24 pieces extant.

Since we had not been charged with anything, beyond being journalists reporting the Tamil war, we relied heavily on the local press for information. The quality newspaper in Sri Lanka is the Colombo Daily News: a curious publication, partly written in Edwardian English, rich in conjunctions, and partly in pidgin. The Daily News was very excited by our predicament and revelled in rumour. It was amusing, though eerie, to read that 'Nicholas David Coleridge, a Briton, is known to have been trained in Moscow'; the following day he had developed Palestinian connections: a reference, I deduced, to my first book being published by Naim Attallah, the Palestinian entrepreneur of Poland Street. Later in the week, for no good reason, Nicholals David Coleridge was transformed by the press into Roger Coleridge, and then Roger Coleman, to the bemusement of readers.

For the new boy in a Sri Lankan jail the first task is to establish which are one's fellow prisoners and which are the guards. Both dress alike and stare in a half-witted manner when you pass by. Several times I was praising the beautiful Sri Lankan climate, with intent to subvert a prison officer, only to discover this was a double murderer. Conversely one would be swapping a little facetious badinage about conlitions, only to learn this was the prison governor.

My cell, which was large, was decorated with three pictures: of the Buddha, Jesus Christ and Miss Sri Lanka 1964. Of the three, Miss Sri Lanka drew the most comment. The double murderer, our tea boy, has plans to seduce here when he is released in 18 years' time. By then Miss Sri Lanka will be aged 61.

When you are checking in at a prison most of your belongings are taken away and meticulously listed in a ledger. Since I do not always unpack to the bottom of my suitcase between holidays, some peculiar items had travelled with me. These included a plastic ice cream spoon from a tub at the Haymarket Theatre, a book of matches from the Caprice restaurant and a Daily Express Millionaires Club card. The Millionaires Club card excited particular interest, since it was believed to be an executive credit card, like gold American Express, allowing instant credit of a million pounds. Despite the painstaking inventory of my things, nobody thought to frisk our suit pockets, so we were still in happy possession of 2000 American dollars. This is a fortune in Sri Lanka. Prison guards earn three dollars a week, so we felt rather like Noel Coward in the opening scenes of The Italian Job, strutting about in silk pyjamas in Wormwood Scrubs. The dollars afforded ▶

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us a constant supply of King coconuts, tinned salmon and Pepsi-cola. There was great rivalry between the guards for the spent bottles for the money back on the empties.

Most afternoons we were visited by Sri Lankan CID to help them with their enquiries. With the exception of a fiendishly cunning Assistant Superintendent, Sri Lankan policemen seemed genial but dozy. We were never interviewed by fewer than six of them at a time and all were determined to get their fair share of questions. Our replies were tape-recorded on a cassette which ran out half way through each interrogation. Many of the questions were surreal and rarely followed each other in any logical way. 'How much money have the Tamil Tiger terrorists bribed you ?' we would be asked. And then: 'Mr. Nicholas, how much does your watch cost at dutyfree prices?' (A peculiar trait of Sri Lankan CID was to address me as 'Mr Nicholas' in the manner of a 19th century housemaid.

In between these interviews some kind of detective work was going on behind the scenes. One afternoon I was informed that the Standard, for whom I had filed a report, had been 'checked up' and found to be a subversive newspaper. Later a copy of the Daily Telegraph, which happened to be in my luggage, was also deemed subversive. 'Where did you get this newspaper?' I was asked. 'A newsagent' I replied. 'Which newsagent?' W.H. Smith.' 'Please spell Smith.

My passport, which is a full one, was regularly fingered. A 1976 package holiday to Russia was though highly compromising. 'Where did you go in Russia?'. 'Moscow and Leningrad.' 'How did you travel?' 'By train'. 'Aha, so you confess you were trained in Russia'.

The tone of these interrogations was volatile. One moment it was self-effacing; We are a simple and peaceful nation, Mr. Nicholas. Lok out of the window, do you see any terrorists?' (From CID headquarters all you could see was sky). But it could change in seconds: 'Don't you realise that we're at war, Mr. Nicholas? There is a state of emergency. We have extraordinary powers. We're fighting for our survival against these terrorists.'

Something that I like about journalism is its limited attention span. The journalist concentrates his mind on a story for a few days or weeks, then forgets most of it as soon as it's filled and moves on to a new article. The Sri Lankan CID do not share my journalistic outlook, and it became rather tiresome, as time went by, to persist in flogging a dead Tamil horse. Even my dexterous demonstration of American break dancing failed to distract them for long.

One of the prison officers was a particularly agreeable chap. His English was perfect and we lent him Agatha Christie

novels. Like all senior officers at Welikade he apologised several times a day for our being there at all, and said he did not know what the country was coming to. We, being well mannered prisoners, said: 'Honestly, it doesn't matter at all, don't worry, ten days in your delightful prison is no inconvenience.' Another guard showed us photographs of his father, a civil servant under British ruler, who had made the crucial century in an inter-departmental cricket match. In the evening we set up coconut shies, using upturned king coconut shells, and pelted them with rolled-up socks. This event was keenly enjoyed by everyone at Welikade and promises to become an established prison pastime.

One night, on our way back from a particularly abstruse interrogation at police headquarters, we were taken to a Chinese restaurant. This was a peculiar episode. First the road around the restaurant, the Nanking, was cleared of all vehicles and sealed by jeeps and guards brandishing Kalashnikov machine guns. Then the poor waiter, shivering with fright, was escorted outside to take our order through the car window (we were not allowed to leave the back seat). Presently several bowls of shark's fin and crab soup were carried out, having first been dragged for secret messages, followed by Chinese fish and chips. The final scene of this comic meal was the waiter bawling after the jeep as we sped away: 'No tips! Why, oh why, do policemans never leave no tips?'.

After ten days in Welikade it was eventually conceded that evidence for our being international terrorists was rather limp, so the airport was indicated instead. An ominous development in Sri Lanka at the moment is an allergy to journalists; two French reporters were being deported on the same flight as us. Nevertheless, despite the daft clowning of the Government, I greatly look forward to returning to Ceylon; it is a delightfully sultry island for a spot of winter sun. ■

Kuldip Nayar SUNDAY

NEW DELHI: Before I could even settle down in a taxi at Colombo airport the agitated driver, a part-time engineering student, asked me: "Why are you dividing our country?" He may have been abrupt in his remark but this summarily represents the dominant thinking among the Sinhalese, who constitute 75 percent of Sri Lanka's population.

They believe that India is at the back of terrorists and that it is out to carve out a homeland in Jaffna, the northern section, for the Tamils, who constitute a mere 17 per cent of the population in the country.

In fact, the Sinhalese talk as if they are in the midst of a war. What is happening in Jaffna is followed like news from the frontlines and they are happy when the "enemy". (Tamils) suffers casualities, despondent when the army loses men or material.

It is a war, none hides it... least of all Sri Lanka's President Jayewardene. This emotional involvement of the Sinhalese has made them quite bitter about India, which is seen behind every spurt of violence. During my last visit to Sri Lanka some one and a half years ago, anti-Tamil feeling: now, it is anti-Indian.

Jayewardene had no hesitation in confirming this. Non-Tamils of Indian origin also feel an increasing animus against them and wonder if they have any future in Sri Lanka.

How many Tamils die every week or, for that matter, how many soldiers are killed during the same period is anybody's guess. Very little is printed in the press because it has to submit every such story to the censors before publishing it. Rumours abound in plenty.

But there is no doubt that the level of operation has been stepped up by both sides. The terrorists are using rockets and one helicopter escaped a direct hit last week when I was there. Jayewardene makes no secret of the fact that he is spending "billions and billions of dollars" to buy the latest equipment to fight the terrorists.

Both China and Pakistan are selling arms to Sri Lanka. Some time back when the Pakistan International Airlines refused ►

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to carry the arms to Colombo on the plea that it was against the aviation ethics to do so in a passenger plane. Gen. Zia overruled the objection saying that it was Sri Lanka who gave them fuelling facilities during the Bangladesh war.

The eight per cent Muslim population in Sri Lanka is not, however, impressed by Gen. Zia. They ultimately fear the same type of treatment as is being meted out to the Tamils. And the induction of Israelis for training of Sri Lankan soldiers has further alienated them.

Apart from the Israeli instructions, the British have been hired by the Sri Lankan Government to assist its soldiers. Jayewardene is quite open about it. In fact, when I asked him he said: "Why should I not ? You can't dictate me"

Who else is helping Sri Lanka is difficult to determine. But, I found Jayewardene confident of emerging victorious and believing that the world is beginning to "appreciate" his point of view. However, he blows hot and cold at the sametime.

The fact that he is going to ask India for the extradition of some Tamil Tiger leaders, reported to be in Tamil Nadu, indicates that he does not pin all his hopes on military operations. He also wants to meet Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the emissary he sent to Delhi was meant to prepare the ground for that meeting.

However, Jayewardene and, for that matter the Sinhalese do not like or trust G Parthasarathy, who has been conducting negotiations on behalf of India. They suspect that he, being a Tamil, has a pro-Tamil bias. Perhaps Romesh Bhandari, Foreign Secretary, should head the negotiating team in the future.

I could not go to Jaffna this time. The government did not give me permission and even Jayewardene said 'No' I found there was no plane, train or bus running to that part of the country. The government proposes to evacuate the people living in the vicinity of Jaffna airport to make it safe for future operations. The entire Jaffna sector has been handed over to the military, which has only the Sinhalese forces operating there. Tamil soldiers, who form 10 per cent of the army, have been kept out.

"Life-in Jaffna is at a standstill" said a senior official in the Sri Lanka government, adding "it is military rule all over; what will you see there ?". At least one lakh fishermen are idle because the military has blocked their access to the sea. Even otherwise life is hard since the limited movement of goods to the area has pushed up the prices and shrunk avenues of employment

A Tamil, who met me in Colombo after having escaped the regin of terror in Jaffna said that the soliders killed people indiscriminately and burnt the belongings which they could not carry. He described with pride how the Tigers (terrorists) blew up a train the other day, killing 45 soldiers and not two as reported in the newspapers.

A Colombo English daily printed a story last week that a car flying a white flag was fired at by the army men in Jaffna killing the driver and injuring a pregnant woman and her husband. It appears that both sides are fighting each other with all the ferocity and Weapons at their command

The stories of atrocities committed by the army are numberous: How peaceful citizens were mowed down, and how dying men and women were denied even medical aid. There is some truth in it, because soldiers are behaving as if they are fighting a war and, the government is condoning everything they are doing. Any demand for an impartial inquiry is brushed aside firmly.

Jayewardene's explanation is that in the past a soldier had to load the gun every time he fired a shot, now he has a hereby press the trigger and a torrent of bullets goes out automatically. "This is what happened when Mrs. Gandhi was assassinated", he said. Jayewardene admits that a Sri Lankan soldier is a "Different man now and he compares him with the Americans who fought in Vietnam "A psychological problem" as he puts it.

The bulk of Sri Lanka's army is in Jaffna, very few soldiers are seen elsewhere. Some guard bridges and key installations in Colombo because of possibility of terrorist strikes in the capital. Business has been affected with a natural shortfall in tourists, but the atmosphere is relaxed.

Scores of doctors, engineers and accountants have left Sri Lanka in the last two years, making the country feel the pinch in these fields. Many other professionals would like to quit provided they could find an alternative, they see little future for themselves and their children. These Tamils are convinced that they are being edged out by the Sinhalese from all walks of life. Though they look towards India — first Mrs. Gandhi was their hope and now it, Rajiv Gandhi — they are not sure how it could save them.

Many Tamils I met realise that terrorism is no solution to their problems, but, they do not condemn it in the hope that it may pressurise Jayewardene's government to come to an early settlement.

The majority, though dreaming of Eelam (independent state), are realisatic enough to say that a solution would have to be found within Sri Lanka. But they want negotiations, thus far protracted and futile, to fructify within the next three to six months.

The Sinhalese also want a settlement — and soon. But they get panikcy when there is a demand for decentralisation of power. They believe that any concession on this point will mean the beginning of their country's disintegration. Sincen the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) has neither condemned the terrorists nor given up the agitation for autonomy, the Sinhalese regard it as a parliamentary wing of the tigers. And, it is no surprise to see Jayewardene crumbling under pressure from within, particularly to the section of extremist buddhists.

What he and the Sinhalese fail to realise is that it — what, began as a movement for greater say for the Tamils has turned into a revolt. A political solution is till possible but a military solution may ultimately suck New Delhi into the fray That will be neither ih India's interest nor Sri Lanka's. ■

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The Killing of a Tamil Catholic priest

It happened in Vankalai, a Catholic village (pop: 5433), in the northern Tamil district of Mannar in Sri Lanka.

It was the night of Saturday 5th January 1985.

Past midnight a convoy of vehicles came along the Mannar — Nanattan road, approaching Vankalai. The vehicles stopped at a distance, and army men walked along the main road — but beside the tarred road — upto the church gate, and surrounded the church and school premises. There was good moonlight.

Heavy firing started around the girls' school and the cemetery area. In the meantime some of the soldiers had walked along the path between the church and girls' school right down to the side gate of the presbytery premises and entered the premises. There was no electric light.

At hearing the first firing, Father Mary Bastian, the parish priest had called the boys who were residing with him and sleeping at that time in the outer room and varandah (Alagan, Nathan, cook and labourer) into the room.

The security personnel who had entered the premises by the rear gate advanced up to the verandah and called 'Father'. Father Mary Bastian, — dressed in cassock, — came out from his bed room to the middle room. Noticing through the open window the army men poised to shoot, he had pleaded "Please, Please". The two boys, Nathan and Alagan, were then in the middle room.

In spite of the pleading Father Mary Bastian was shot at through the window; he collapsed screaming "Ayo-Amma". The men then forced open the door and entered the middle room and flashing a torch fired at the two boys Alagan and Nathan. Following this shoting there was a walkie-talkie radio conversation in English. Subsequently the priests body was removed out by the rear gate, carried by give soldiers and deposited on the steps of the entrance to the girls' school (old building) and some stood guarding.

On the rear verandah of the presbytery, by the side of the door, there were four barrels of kerosene for distribution to the people the following day. After the removal of the Priests body, one of these drums was turned down and the kerosene spilt into the middle room. (In the morning the three spots where the three had collapsed after being shot, were clearly visible with spilt-blood mixed with kerosene.)

Firing all around the premises continued. Some of those who had taken shelter in the girls school for greater safety at night but had moved about in panic at the firing, were struck dead.

An old woman, Thangachiamma, seventy-two years old, who had come running from her home to the church on hearing the firing, was shot dead.

In the very early hours before dawn there were conversations, the movement of a van near the school entrance, the order 'Arang Yanda', and the priest's body was taken away in the van.

Sometime after 6 a.m. the sisters in the Convent, who had been indoors the whole night inspite of the firing and commotion, opened the outer gate of their Convent. The soldier guarding outside, noticing the sisters, ordered them to come out. With the sisters the girls residing with them were also ordered out. With all of them lined up out-side, the sisters were told that a search was to be made of the Convent and the army men entered unaccompanied by any of the inmates, and ransacked the entire convent and premises. They had even opened the Tabernacle in the Oratory and dismantled the monstrance with the Sacred Host.

Wrist-watches, cash and other articles had been found missing subsequently.

The Sisters and girls were led into the church by the soldiers by a door under the portico. They were not allowed to take their normal route to the church. Except for this door, all other doors and windows of the church were locked.

Some beggars who had been resting in the church premises were also shut in within the church.

Some people who had taken shelter for the night in the old girls school were then brought out by the soldiers and led into the church. These people had noticed fresh blood-stains on the steps as they walked out. Some males among them were also included in the number of those taken away to the camp at the end of the operation.

About 7-30 a.m. a lorry moved into the church compound upto the entrance at the rear; the bodies of the dead were loaded there and some more in the cemetery area.

The army men trooped in near the gate close to the main road and all left.

After the forces had left, those who were left in the church and others from outside saw for themselves the presbytery and informed the Bishop's House, Mannar, about the happenings and the disapperance of the parish priest.

As soon as the message was received at the Bishop's House, Bishop Thomas Savundaranayagam communicated by phone with the authorities at Thallady army Camp and inquired about the nocturnal activities at Vankalai. He was told that there was an operation by the security forces at Vankalai and that eight dead bodies had been brought. When questioned about the disappearance of Father Mary Bastian, parish priest, the reply was that they knew nothing of the priest and a suggestion was made that he might have run away.

The Bishop and the Vicar General then went to Vankalai; there they met the

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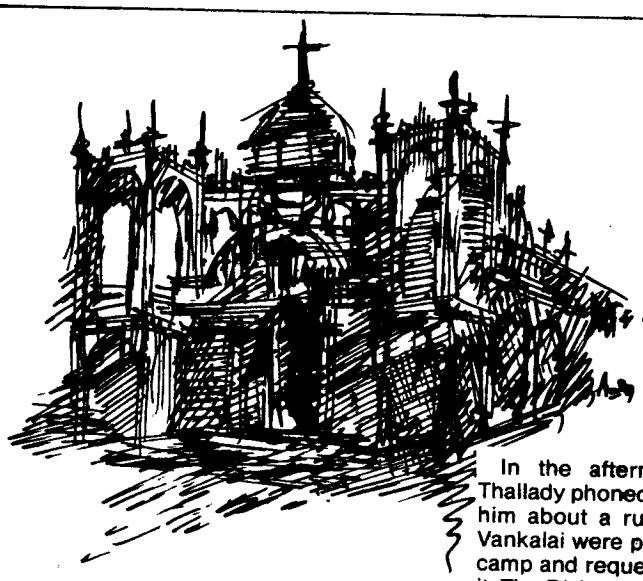

assembled parishioners crying and weeping over the death and disappearance of their pastor. They visited the room, and the spot where father had been shot with two of his boys.

The people were then called into the church and the Bishop had a prayer-service with them. He then addressed them. When he mentioned during his talk about his inquiring from the camp and the answer he received, there was a loud mournful reaction from the people. Some villagers from among the crowd had mentioned seeing thick clouds of smoke rising from the direction of Thallady army camp in the early hours of the morning, and even gave expression to the suspicion that Father's body might have been burnt up in the camp premises.

Then the Bishop and the Vicar General inspected the Convent and interviewed the sisters.

They then met the members of the church committee, and left for Mannar. When they returned to Mannar, the Bishop again inquired from the authorities at Thallady camp about Rev. Father Mary Bastian and mentioned that he had been told at Vankalai that some persons had seen the body of Father Mary Bastian being carried away by the soldiers in a van. The officer had expressed surprise and assured the Bishop of a discreet inquiry.

About mid-day nine bodies were produced at the Mannar Hospital Mortuary. The body of the priest was not among these. Those of the two boys shot in the presbytery with Father were identified. Those identified were:

Balasubramaniam Alagaratnam (15)
Michael Nathan Croos (27)
Soosaiappu Peries Hermon Pieries (19)
S. Quintus Peries (18) Thangachiamma (72) S. Antony Feldano (24) G. Rufus Croos (22) Dalmeida Thasan (Jeeva) (28)
Santiagu Edirasingham (21)

In the afternoon, the officer from Thallady phoned to the Bishop informing him about a rumour that people from Vankalai were preparing to march to the camp and requesting the Bishop to stop it. The Bishop also questioned him about the announcement through the mass media concerning arms and ammunitions found in the church and the church being used as a terrorist base.

To this the officer replied that these were found in the school compound and that his soldiers never entered the church!.

The fact is that Rev. Father Mary Bastian was brutally murdered. The murder has been well planned. Attempts had been made to remove traces of evidence. Stories had been concocted to implicate the church in terrorist activities.

The Light of Truth will shine forth even if for a moment it is obscured! But the obscuring of the Truth was what the government set about next.

PITCHED BATTLE AT CHURCH SITE — said the headline in the government-run Daily News of January 7.

"Eight terrorists were killed", said the report, "and five captured after a gun battle early yesterday near a Catholic church at Vankalai in the Mannar district, the Ministry of State said".

Since there was a "pitched battle", the Ministry of State had necessarily to make the army discover arms and ammunition in the "church site", and this the army obligingly did. The report said: "The soldiers had later found 56 sticks of dynamite — (this also incidentally helped to prove that the Sri Lanka soldiers can count up to a hundred) — a quantity of spent and live 9 mm ammunition, several spent and live shotgun catridges, eight hand grenades, terrorist leaflets, books, cassettes and tapes".

After the "pitched battle" there was not even a single casualty reported on the government side. The Ministry knew, surely, of at least one major casualty — TRUTH — but why bother about that, when even Sinhalese correspondents of reputed foreign newspapers like the Times, London, Daily Telegraph, and Guardian, do not bother to question ?

While the Ministry of State in charge of (Dis) Information spoke feelingly about the "pitched battle" (in which 72-year old woman Thangachiamma also died) the Minister of National (In) Security Lalith Athulathmudali suggested that Father Mary Bastian had presumably beaten his naval blockade and crossed over to India Apparently his soul flew away across the waters while the army burnt his mortal frame!

The role of the Bishops Conference

Meanwhile, the Sinhale-dominated Catholic Bishops Conference torn their loyalty to their sacred Faith and Truth on one hand and Sinhala racism and Falsehood on the other, decided to do a balancing trick — go 50% for Truth and Faith and 50% for the other! They issued a statement that since "different versions" about the incident were published in the media, they urged the government to hold "a thorough investigation and an impartial inquiry at the highest level" in order to establish the truth. How do these worthy Bishops expect a government which was a party to the crime of killing the priest, or at least a party to the hushing up of the truth of the killing to appoint an "impartial inquiry" ? Is it sheer naivette or an attempt to dodge a moral religious crisis in their own hearts ?

The Tamil Catholics were quick to see the hypocritical stand taken by the Bishops Conference. In a letter dated 19 January, addressed to the Bishops Conference, titled — THE DOUBLE STAND the Presbyterium of Jaffna Diocese wrote:—

"Permit us to make some observations on two statements of the Bishops Conference, recently published in the Press.

"The statement issued by the Catholic Bishops' Conference in Sri Lanka at the killing of a Catholic Sri Lankan Tamil Priest at Vankalai, Mannar, stands in appalling contrast to that issued at the killing of a Japanese Buddhist Monk in Jaffna. While in the case of the Buddhist Monk the Bishops being "shocked at the news learnt 'with deep regret' from the versions presented by the local media, did 'hasten to condemn this type of violence perpetrated on innocent persons' and did deplore 'the sacrilegious shooting of the Buddhist Monk on a way side, it is a matter of utter surprise and deep anguish for us Catholics in Jaffna to note that in the case of the Catholic Priest, they, the Catholic Bishops, having also learnt from

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reports which reached them from the Bishops of Mannar and Jaffna, their own members of the Conference, issued a hesitant and noncommittal statement which neither condemned nor regretted or deplored the brutal murder of the Catholic priest, Rev. Fr. Mary Bastian, in the Parish House itself.

"One begins to wonder if the Bishops Conference has lost confidence in one or two of their own in not readily accepting their reports as true, and whether it has also lost faith in the sacred character of the Catholic Priesthood in not considering the killing of the Catholic priest as sacrilegious.

"We expected the Bishops, the successors of the Apostles of the Gospel Message of Truth and Justice who condemn violence from any quarters, to have also condemned and deplored the killing of the Catholic Priest even without first having to ascertain from which quarter this violence emanated."

"We were disillusioned by the fact that not even a word of sympathy was addressed to the grief-stricken and distressed Catholic Clergy and their Catholic brethren of the North, while they offered their 'deepest sympathies to the Buddhist Clergy and our Buddhist brethren.

"These statements of the Bishops Conference seem also to suggest that, while there was no justifiable provocation for the shooting of the Buddhist Monk who is presumed to be innocent by them and who was identifiable by the local people only by the robes he wore, the killing of the Catholic priest in his clerical dress could have been permitted to be perpetrated, had there been some provocation."

"It would not be out of place to point out at this juncture that, Catholics being the majority christian community in Sri Lanka, the image of the Catholic Bishops' Conference would have been enhanced as a body that trancends the barriers of race and creed and advocates the cause of the minorities, had it not maintained that inexplicable silence over the brutal killing of the Tamil Christian Methodist priest, Rev. G.N. Jayarajasingam in Mannar."

"Unless the powerful machinery of the Church, through the written and spoken word, is properly geared to serve and champion the cause of truth and justice and thus eradicate falsehood and savagery, it will sooner of later find itself in a sorry plight as to its allegiance — to God also or to Caesar alone!".

The Ceylon Tamil who became a leader in Singapore

Singapore Letter

"I have often wondered whether I would have attained the position I now hold in the Singapore Cabinet had I stayed on in Ceylon, and ventured into its politics".

Who says that ? Singapore's Senior Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, once that country's Foreign Minister, now an elder statesman and one of Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's trusted lieutenants — SINNATHAMBY RAJARATNAM.

Born in Ceylon to Ceylonese Tamil parents, long before the island took the name of Sri Lanka, Rajaratnam did a wise thing in adopting Singapore as his home and country.

Speaking at the 75th anniversary celebrations of the Singapore Ceylon Tamils' Association on February 10, Mr. Rajaratnam said:

"Over the past 25 years, the government has shown extra concern to the rights and dignity of the minorities. It has resisted the temptation to placate, to was the majority at the expense of the minorities".

This policy, he said, had been an "impregnable shield" which protected Singapore's minorities. He described how the government had kept the communal threat at bay with tough policies that were fair to both the majority and the minorities, offering everyone equal opportunities and justice.

He cited himself, a Ceylon Tamil, as an example of how a member of a minority community could avail himself of advancement opportunities.

He added: "I like to think I am where I am purely on the basis of merit. If I have to be modest, then it may be that I fooled the Prime Minister into believing that I had great merit".

On a more serious note, he said: "It is only in a communally oriented government that meritocracy is suspect and demonstration of merit on the part of members of a minority severely punished This is not so in Singapore".

Earlier, he did not mince his words when attacking those who played communal politics.

"This kind of tragedy (of racial conflicts) becomes inevitable when avaricious, ignorant and totally unprincipled politicians play on the stupid prejudices and primitive emotions of a people who allow themselves to be led to perdition by spurious messiahs".

The single most important lesson that Singapore's Ceylon Tamils must draw from Sri Lanka's "tragedy", he said, was that "racial, linguistic, cultural or religious conflicts and violence are the consequence of crooked politics and cowardly leadership".

Tamil Nadu Bishops appeal to Rajiv

An appeal to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to help find a solution to "rescue the helpless Tamils of Sri Lanka", has been made by 13 Catholic Bishops of Tamil Nadu.

Most. Rev. V.S. Selvanathar, Archbishop of Pondicherry-Cuddalore and President of the Tamil Nadu Bishops' Conference has signed the appeal on behalf of Most. Rev. Dr. R. Arulappa, Archbishop of Madras-Mylapore, Most. Rev. Justin Diraviam, Archbishop of Madurai, and ten other Bishops representing all other dioceses.

The Bishops have drawn particular reference to the "murder of a Catholic priest in Mannar" on 6th January

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Observe civilised norms, Civil Rights Movement tells Sri Lanka govt.

The need for the Sri Lanka government, "however embattled, to observe civilised norms in dealing with offenders and to prevent all avoidable hardships to the civilian population", has been underlined by the Civil Rights Movement in Sri Lanka in a recent public statement. Mr. Desmond Fernando, Secretary, has signed the statement on behalf of the Movement, from 16/1, Don Carolos Road, Colombo 5.

"These norms", the statement says, "are not creations of CRM but are international standards to which the government of Sri Lanka has freely committed itself, and to which it is bound by international law. They are laid down in international documents which specify precisely what one cane, and what one can never do; what methods can never be resorted to even in a time of war. Such standards cannot be abandoned".

The Civil Rights Movement has made the following observations on the current situation:—

(i) Mass Arrests

State security forces are now adopting, in the Jaffna district, the method of cordoning off specific areas and then taking into custody all young Tamil males, falling usually between the ages of 15 and 30, caught within the cordoned areas. These persons are being taken into custody on the basis that they belong to a specific ethnic, age and sex group amongst whom there may be suspected offenders.

While it is correct that a large number of those taken into custody are released after interrogation, this method is in violation of their fundamental rights and is contrary to human rights conventions adopted by Sri Lanka.

The method has been explained by state authorities as an inevitable result of the lack of information. CRM cannot accept this as a justification for its general adoption; it is an extreme measure that should be kept to a minimum consistent with the exigencies of the situation. If this practice cannot be abandoned, the government should expedite the inquiries and release promptly those against whom there is no evidence.

(ii) Treatment of Persons taken into custody

Persons taken into custody in the northern areas are being transferred to detention camps in the South. CRM is aware that the conditions under which detainees are being transported are generally bad; at times container ships with no basic facilities have been used. Some detainees are reported to have been kept in camps with no change of clothing for as long as 15 days. CRM urges that detainees be treated humanely and kept in conditions that accord with basic standards.

Some detainees held in camps in the North have been killed under doubtful circumstances. One such recent instance is in the army camp at Vavuniya where it was alleged that about 22 detainees had been killed while attempting to escape. CRM cannot emphasise too strongly the responsibility of the state to ensure the security and safety of persons in its custody. It will be recalled that the killing of 53 prisoners at Welikade Jail in July 1983 was condemned by CRM which called for an impartial investigation into the incidents and the punishment of those who are found guilty. The government has taken no action in this regard. This inaction could encourage the repetition of similar incidents. CRM notes with concern that there has been no follow up to another death in custody, that of K. Navaratnarajah who died in the Gurunagar Army Camp on 10 April 1983 and who was found at a post mortem examination to have sustained 25 external and 10 internal injuries. CRM urges the government to hold a judicial inquiry into every death in custody and take effective deterrent action.

(iii) Excesses by the Security Forces

(a) The security forces still retaliate against the civilian population after attacks by the militants. Several incidents have been brought to the attention of CRM. The instance of the incidents at Mannar on 4th December 1984 can be taken as one of the worst. An attack on a jeep which resulted in the death of one soldier and injury to several others had been followed, according to reliable reports, by a mass attack on civilians living within 3 to 4 miles of the incident, on the passengers of buses plying on this road and on the staff of the Murunkan Post Office. The final death toll has been estimated at about 107.

Numerous other cases of arbitrary killing of civilians by the security forces have been also reported from Jaffna, Vavuniya and Mullaitivu districts. There have been other alleged incidents in Mannar as well, in which civilians including two members of Christian clergy have been killed. CRM cannot accept the argument that the State is unable to find reliable evidence to prosecute such offenders. The State must ensure that its security forces do not turn on civilians in the pursuit of its military operations and must be quick to punish infractions. It is not possible to condone the killing of civilian non-combatants by the security forces.

(b) CRM is aware of increasing complaints that women have been sexually molested and raped by some members of the security forces in their search and arrest operations. CRM calls upon the government to devise measures that will prevent such incidents and, where they have occurred, to punish the offenders.

(c) CRM has referred, in earlier statements, to complaints of theft by some members of the security forces in the course of their operations. Such thefts continue and the government does not appear to have taken effective deterrent action.

(iv) Effects of Security Operations on Civilian Life

The government has declared the Jaffna and part of the Kilinochchi District as a security zone, and the littoral from Mannar to Mullaitivu (subsequently extended from Kokkilai to Kudremalai Point) to a distance of 100 metres inland from the beach (and five miles seaward) as a prohibited zone;

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it has enacted a series of regulations controlling various forms of activity within the zones.

No person can be within the prohibited zone without a permit. This means in effect the forced evacuation of other persons living within this area. The magnitude of this operation, if it is to be carried out, is enormous, as a significant part of the population of the Jaffna district lives on the northern coast line from Ponnalai to Point Pedro. Reliable reports indicate that about 80,000 people have been already relocated, very often in refugee camps. The fishing industry in Jaffna district which accounts for almost 25% of the island's production of fish has virtually come to a standstill, throwing into enormous distress almost 22,000 families of fishermen and of others dependent on the fishing industry in the Jaffna district.

Other forms of distress caused by the declaration of the prohibited zone become apparent if one examines its consequences on a single Urban Council area. Fifty per cent of the 14,000 inhabitants of Valvettiturai are estimated to live within the prohibited zone; five of the seven schools, the hospital, the post office, the Urban Council office, the burial ground and the crematorium all lie within the prohibited zone. What will result, if all the prohibited zone regulations are rigorously implemented, is the disruption of the entire civil life of the community.

Regulations covering the security zone are also stringent. No person can move out of or into the security zone without due authorisation. No one can operate any means of transport, including pedal bicycles, without a permit. Travel, when authorised, is restricted to certain hours and to certain routes. Private buses are off the roads. State-run buses operate only within the terms of the regulations. Fuel is rationed. Curfews have extended to as long as 61 hours at a stretch.

These regulations have had several drastic effects. The lack of fuel and of transport have affected agricultural and industrial operations within the area. Farms lie unirrigated; factories lie idel in the absence of raw materials, fuel and workers. People dependent on these forms of economic activity are unable to earn their living.

As a result of the curbs on transport, food supplies have run short. People and doctors cannot get to hospitals; doctors were issued with permits to use their cars only 8 days after the regulations were brought into force. All schooling has been affected.

The net result of the regulations establishing the prohibited zone and the security zone has been the total disruption of economic and social life in the region. CRM maintains that the methods chosen should never exceed absolute necessity and must not cause unnecessary hardship to the civilian community. CRM therefore calls upon the government to review the regulations establishing and governing the prohibited and security zones and revoke them as soon as possible.

(v) Arming of Civilians

CRM also wishes to draw attention to another unusual step. Civilians in the Trincomalee district have been given arms by police, ostensibly for their self-defence. Instances have been reported of such individuals and groups using their arms to terrorise persons of the Tamil community. CRM is also alarmed by reports that fishermen and other residents moving back to the Mullaitivu area are being armed. CRM urges the civil and security authorities in this region to review this procedure immediately and to take such action as is necessary to prevent abuses...

"Finally, as an organisation devoted to the maintenance and indeed expansion of civil rights within a democratic framework, CRM would like to stress the absolute necessity of resuming negotiations in a form that would ensure a just political solution; the absence of such a solution and the continuance of the present situation can only result in the further erosion of the civil and democratic rights of all the citizens of this country.

A Point of View

SUSPEND THIS VIOLENCE!

Professor K. Swaminathan, Vice-President, Ramana Kendra, New Delhi, writes:

The cow is mightier than the tiger and the pen than the sword.

This is the faith held firmly and found true by the Tamil people through the ages and sung loud and clear by the Tamil poet-saints from Valluvar and Tirumular to Vallalar and Sri Ramana. A familiar saying during India's freedom struggle was that it was easier to set fire to an iceberg than to turn a Tamil into a terrorist. And yet, next only to Gujarat, Tamil Nad made the finest and most lasting contribution to building the new, free India.

Philosophy and history apart, expediency and common sense demand that the impatient Tamils of Eezham should promptly and formally declare a moratorium, a temporary suspension of violence, so as to give reason and persuasion a chance to prevail. Such a public declaration would remove the excuse which the Government of Sri Lanka has found for carrying on genocide and calling it "suppression of terrorism". It would also enable Tamils everywhere to apply moral and political pressure to make all the parties concerned to live upto their nobler nature.

In Annexure C of the proceedings of the All Party Conference (1983) and in the appeal issued in December 1984 by hundreds of Sri Lanka citizens, there is enough common ground for a peaceful, political solution acceptable to all parties, which would be superior to any military solution. The moratorium may be limited to a period of one year and may be viewed as an ultimatum, so that violence on behalf of Sri Lanka Tamils, if it became inevitable, could be employed in a more organized and systematic manner through means considered legitimate by international public opinion. Surgical violence under aseptic conditions is different from blind wounding with blunt weapons.

All violence is deplorable but sporadic and ineffective violence is self-defeating, wasteful and humiliating.

If Tamils cannot demonstrate the power of non-violence, who else in the world can ?

IF Buddhism in on trial in Sri Lanka, so is Tamil culture.

If Buddhism enjoins dharma, Saivism enjoins dynamic love, the love that keeps alive the charming illusion that cow and calf are two different beings.

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Tax monies of U.S. citizens used for reign of terror in Sri Lanka

Tamils who are citizens of the United States have sent out the following appeal to U.S. Congressmen and the world ambassadors in Washington :—

"This urgent appeal is addressed to you on behalf of the Tamils of Sri Lanka, an ethnic minority which has been increasingly subjected to severe forms of repression and terrorism by the Government of Sri Lanka."

"You have no doubt heard of the long-standing ethnic problems in Sri Lanka resulting from the systematic deprivation of the civic rights and discrimination in the economic and political life which the Tamils have suffered at the hands of the Government of Sri Lanka. The attempts of the Tamils to restore their legitimate rights in a democratic manner have only met with intensified terrorism by the Government by the imposition of military rule in the Tamil areas, mass arrests and torture of innocent Tamils as suspected dissidents, the execution of people held in custody without trial or charges, the killing of innocent people in public places and the destruction of property. These actions of the Government have in turn produced a militant resistance movement, though restricted to a few people.

"The vast majority of the Tamils, however, remain steadfast in their desire to find a solution by peaceful and democratic means, while remaining resolute in seeking justice and fair play. The Government has used the emergence of a militant resistance movement as an excuse to further intensify its reign of terror and seems to have resolved to seek a military "solution" to the problem. In recent months, the Government has stepped up its military action by laying siege to the Tamil areas, by mass killings of innocent civilians, mass arrests of young men and school children making it appear that these are suspected dissidents, deprivation of the means of livelihood for thousands by prohibition of fishing, by declaring a "no-man's land" over a 200-mile stretch along the coastline inhabited by Tamils, mainly fishermen, by disrupting food and fuel supplies in the Tamil areas — evidently to starve out the Tamil people to submission by setting up a security zone covering the Jaffna district and blocking the roads leading to and out of the district, putting restrictions on the possession and movement of vehicles within the zone and the sale of fuel, and by the imposition of curfews which sometimes extend over several days at a stretch."

"The severity of the Government's actions and the critical nature of the present situation in Sri Lanka can be seen from the attached cuttings of press reports. We would like to point out that these reports do not fully reflect the actual situation as they are based on news releases by the Government. Correspondents of independent news media are not permitted to visit the Tamil areas or to transmit news other than news censored by the Government."

"We would also point out that tax monies of the people of this country are being utilized for the reign of terror perpetrated by the Government of Sri Lanka, since it has officially declared that funds from the development budget (which is heavily dependent on foreign aid) would be diverted for military operations against the Tamils, euphemistically called "defence and security".

"While the Government is engaged in an undeclared war against a helpless section of its population, the Government media and news releases peripodically make loud claims of the many concessions being planned to be made to the Tamil being planned to be made to the Tamil community, exhibiting a concilatory posture. Such have been the delaying tactics since the holocaust of July 1983; eighteen months have lapsed and the Government has successfully increased the severity of its punishment meted to the Tamils. Every time there is a mass murder and execution of Tamils or burning and destruction of a whole village, public market, a school or library (crimes committed by the Government armed services or other agents), the Government will engage in a media blitz of the "positive steps" it intends to take towards solving the Tamil problem. Such is the recent report in the December 15, 1984 edition of the Washington Post — a Government news release made in the wake of mass arrests of about 3,000 Tamils mostly school children, women and elderly Tamils described as "suspected terrorists", but taken as hostages to the Sinhalese areas, mass executions of Tamils, and the arming of Sinhalese ex-convicts, fishermen and civilians who are encouraged to kill Tamil men and children, and rape women living in isolated villages in the Tamil areas.

"Recent report of proposals made by President Jayawardene for district councils, supposedly aimed at "power-sharing," are only meant to pull the wool over the eyes of outside observers, to create the impression of the Government's interest in a political solution, and to cloak its evil intentions. It is well known to Sri Lankans and to those following Sri Lankan affairs that district councils have been in existence for more than two years and have been thoroughly discredited and found unworkable. Instead of effecting a devolution of power, these councils were designed to be tightly controlled by the central government. The present proposals, stripped of the verbiage, would result in the total subservience of district councils to the central government. They would, therefore, be unacceptable as a means of solving the ethnic problems of Sri Lanka in the slightest degree, and have in fact been rejected by other political parties, Sinhalese and Tamil.

"We would urge you to persuade your Government to exert pressure on the Sri Lanka Government to put an end to the harsh repression of the Tamil people and gross violations of human rights amounting to genocide.".

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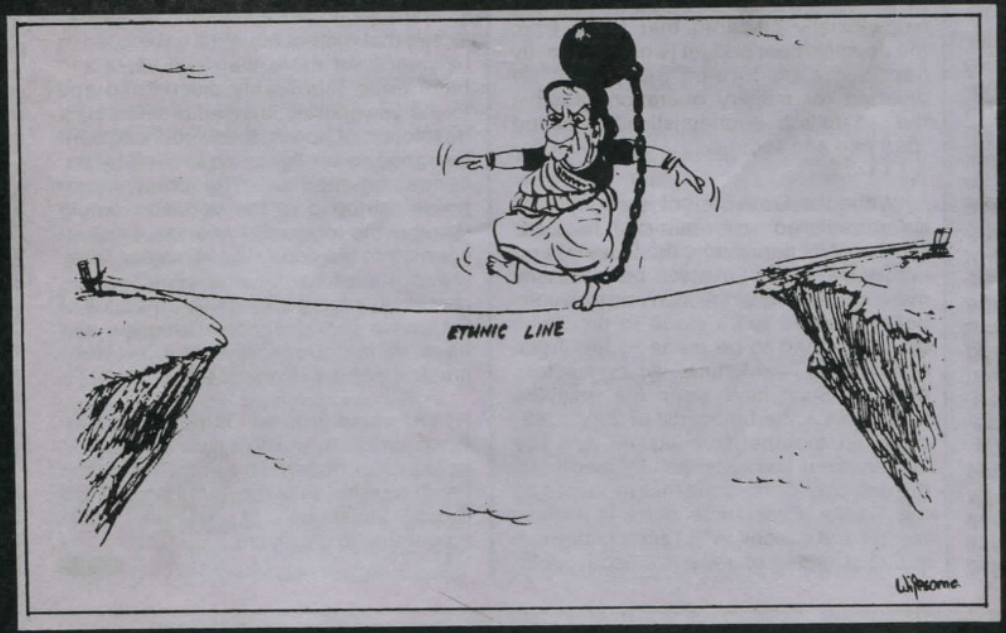
THE COLOMBO VIEW

Former Prime Minister Mrs. Srima Bandaranaike, Plantation Tamils leader S. Thondaman and TULF leader A. Amirthalingam, as seen by The Island newspaper cartoonist Wijesoma.



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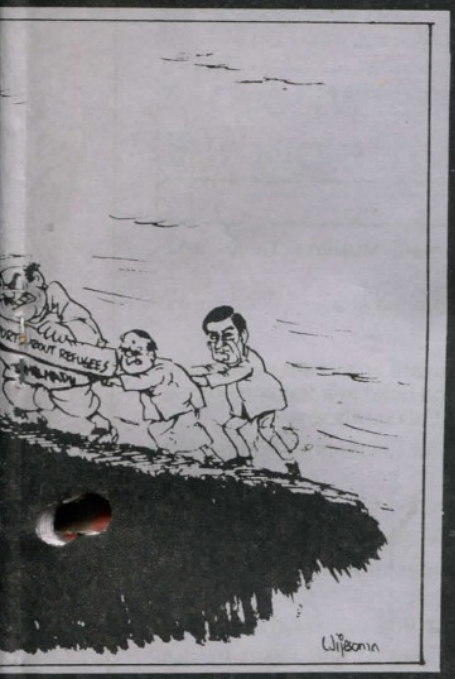
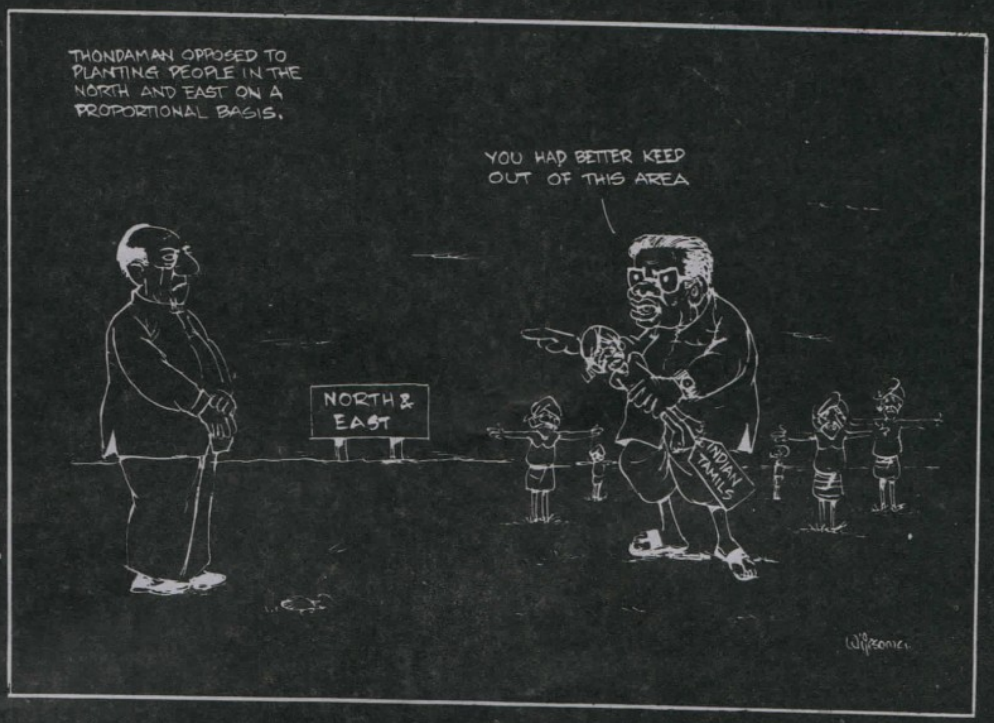
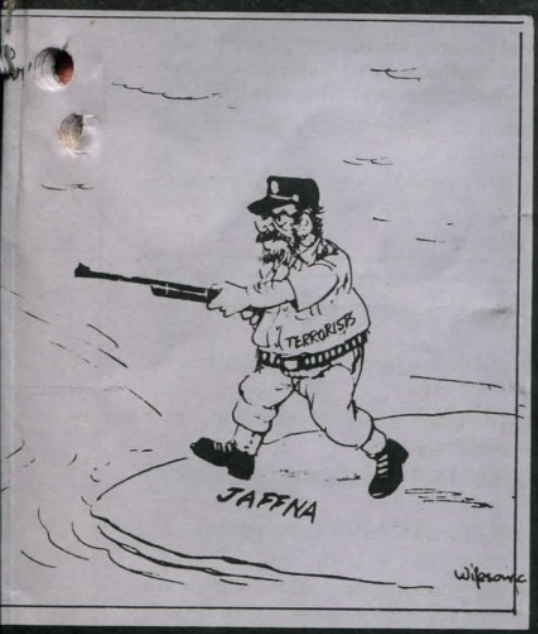
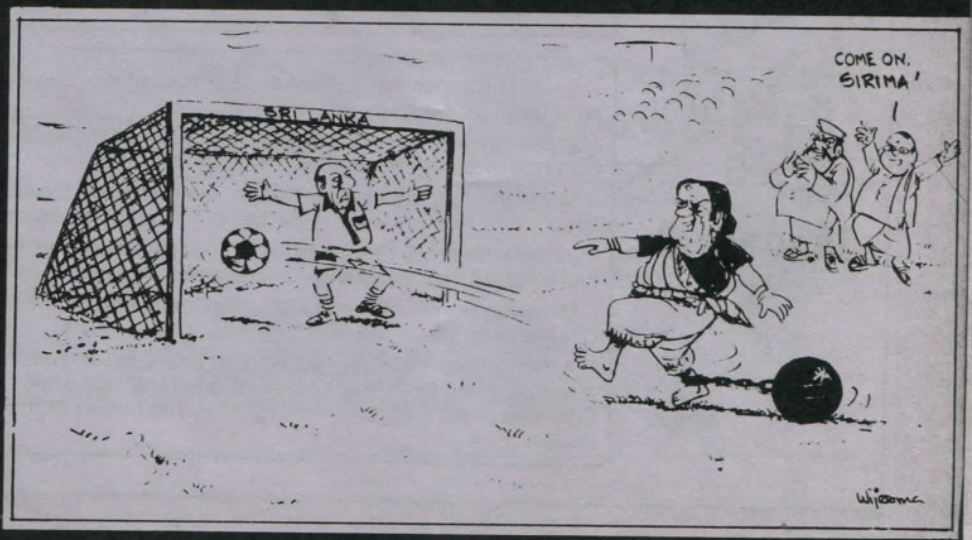



THONDAMAN OPPOSED TO PLANTING PEOPLE IN THE NORTH AND EAST ON A PROPORTIONAL BASIS.
YOU HAD BETTER KEEP OUT OF THIS AREA
NORTH & EAST
INDIAN TAMILS





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January Diary

Government Terrorism and Liberation Struggle in Tamil Eelam:

January 1

More than 2000 signatories including Buddhist monks, Christian clergymen, Muslims, Tamils and professionals make a New Year appeal in Colombo for "peace with justice".

Mathagal, coastal village in Jaffna continues to be shelled by cannon fire from the sea.

Reports of starvation in coastal areas.

News arrive of how an army major and sergeant major were killed at Mankulam army camp yesterday when a bomb accidentally exploded during a training session. The bomb, being used in a training course on defusing explosive devices also seriously wound 5 others including three Police officers.

Colombo Radio says the wives of the two Police inspectors kidnapped by Tamil militants have appealed to Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to help get their husbands released.

Indian Coast Guard vessel Chand Bibi arrives at Rameswaram to give protection to Indian fishermen.

Tamil militants blow up 30-foot long railway culvert between Kodikamam and Pallai.

2000 Tamil youths, some below the age of 15, rounded up by armed forces at Alvai, Thikkam and Navalady near the Northern coast.

A sum of Rs. 1,60,000, money which was taken to the Hatton National Bank Jaffna, robbed at gun point.

At Poonagari, a fisherman Asirvatham Dias (24) from Passaiyur Jaffna shot at and killed from a helicopter while fishing in the sea.

January 2

Two boat loads of Tamils from the coastal areas in Jaffna arrive at India's Nagapattinam harbour. Of the 58 Tamils in the boats, 12 are women, two of them with new born babies in their arms, and 10 children. They say that unable to bear the torture by armed forces they collected diesel over a long period and set on five boats. They are not aware of what happened to the other three boats and people.

Private lorry transporting foodstuffs from Kandy to Jaffna stopped at Kekirawa by members of the armed forces and sent back. Driver and cleaner and two others in the lorry assaulted. "Are you taking food for the Tamil Tigers" ? the men were asked before they were sent back.

At Jaffna General Hospital an acute shortage of Oxygen. Several operations held up.

Mullaithivu residents face critical situation due to non-availability of food. Particularly hard-hit are the refugees in various camps.

Sri Lanka government to create a new post of Commander-in-chief of security forces. Army Commander Maj. Gen. T.I. Weeratunga to be promoted Lt. Gen. and appointed to the new post. Brig. Nalin Seneviratne now army Commander in North to be promoted Maj. General and appointed the next army chief.

Former Prime Minister Mrs. Srimavo Bandaranaike in a statement in Colombo calls for General Elections.

Sri Lankan police say, according to Colombo report that Tamil militants based in and around Nuwara-Eliya have demanded a separate up country state named as "Malai Nadu". This comes in addition to the demand for Eelam.

January 3

Senator Charles Percy, former Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, US, arrives on New Delhi on a 3-day visit.

Three senior superintendents of police are on the verge of quitting the police force in Sri Lanka, having declined to accept transfer orders to the North.

Mr. Mervyn Andriesz, President of the Sea Food Exporters' Association Jaffna, expresses the fear that about 2500 workers were in danger of losing their jobs owing to the present situation.

Jaffna's Mothers' Front has told the government that 14,000 families (75,000 people approximately) in the northern coastal fishing villages are facing starvation.

Deputation from the Jaffna Citizens Committee meets Minister Lalith Athulathmudali at Marga Institute, Colombo.

A father and his three young daughters killed and his 12-year old son wounded when army men attacked a family in the course of combing operations against "terrorists" in Vavuniya, according to Colombo press reports quoted by AFP. The bodies of the 4 victims were brought to Vavuniya hospital by Police.

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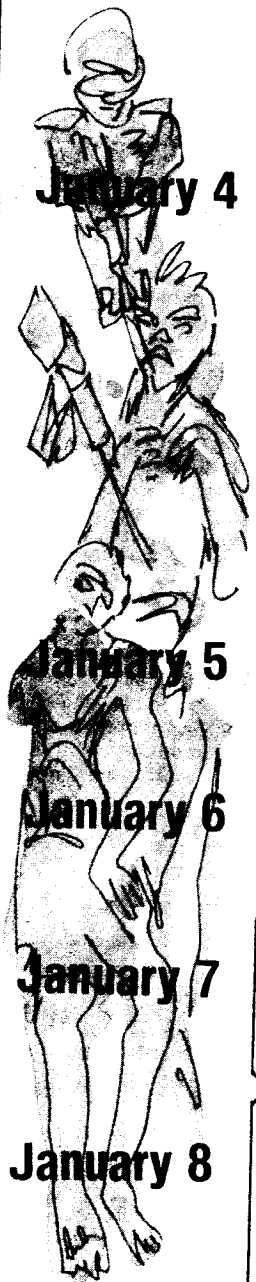
January Diary

Government Terrorism and Liberation Struggle in Tamil Eelam:



January 4

At least 5,000 Tamils from the northern areas are ready with travel documents to come to India as soon as the Talaimannar-Rameswaram ferry service is resumed, according to reports reaching Mandapam, says INDIAN EXPRESS. Resumption of ferry service was scheduled for January 4.

Lengthy letter from President Jayawardene to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi handed over by Sri Lanka High Commissioner, but New Delhi report by G.K. Reddy says Jayawardene has neither sought India's help nor come forward with any fresh suggestions.

Sri Lanka seeks Tamil Nadu Police assistance to trace two kidnapped Police Inspectors under the belief they had been brought to India.

People who ran in fear when they saw an army convoy approaching were fired upon at Arasady Junction in Jaffna. 62-year old music teacher Kadirgamar Damodaran Pillai, a 24-year old man who was on leave from employment in Saudi Arabia and another unidentified man killed on the spot. The gold chain worn by the Saudi Arabian employee was robbed by the army men from his dead body. Two others escaped with injuries.

Half a mile away, Jaffna hospital's specialist orthopaedic surgeon Dr. Sivagnanavel who was cycling to work due to curb on use of cars, stopped by security forces, assaulted on the face and the chest and threatened with death. Hospital staff strike work, and Army Commander Brig. Nalin Seneviratne conveys his personal apologies.

Jaffna Bishop Rev. Dr. B. Deogupillai appeals to President Jayawardene to release all innocent Tamil youths under the same humanitarian considerations in which the President appealed to Tamil militants to elease the two kidnapped Police Inspectors.

January 5

President Reagan's special envoy Senator Charles Percy has two meetings with Rajiv Gandhi in New Delhi.

In New York, Ilankai Tamil Sangam asks UN Secretary General to post a UN peace-keeping force in Sri Lanka "to prevent further loss of Tamil lives".

In Madras, Dr. T.R. Janarthanan, MLC, President of the World Tamil Youth Federation, appeals to Rajiv Gandhi to "take immediate and stern measures to end the genocidal killings of Tamils in Sri Lanka".

January 6

Shocking army atrocities in Vankalai, in the Tamil district of Mannar. Under curfew, soon after midnight, young parish priest Fr. Mary Bastian is shot to death in the presbytery along with two others. Six others also killed, and all bodies except that of the priest were handed over to Mannar Police.

In Jaffna, 400 Tamil youths were rounded up yesterday and detained for interrogation, according to Colombo newspaper "The Island"

January 7

In New Delhi, Rajiv Gandhi in an interview to an American news magazine says India will be having "another look" at the ethnic issue in Sri Lanka.

Police state in Colombo that separatist guerillas had burnt down Chavakachcheri court house last night destroying all court records.

President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference Bishop Frank Marcus Fernando telegraphs President Jayawardene to hold a high-level impartial inquiry into killing of Fr. Mary Bastian.

January 8

Another batch of 36 Sri Lankan Tamils who fled the island in a mechanised boat land at Nagapattinam in India. They included seven women and 18 children.

India lodges another strong protest with Sri Lanka over renewed attacks on Indian fishermen in the country's territorial waters. Acting High Commissioner Alfred David told of two Indian fishermen killed on the night of the 7th off Dhanushkodi.

Sri Lanka government announces in Colombo that plans are finalised to settle 30,000 Sinhalese families in the Tamil north this year, with the ultimate aim of creating "parity" in the population of the two communities. Settlements would be created in Kilinochchi, Vavuniya, Mullaitivu and Mannar districts and extended to Jaffna peninsula next year. The new settlers would be given military training and provided arms.

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January Diary

Government Terrorism and Liberation Struggle in Tamil Eelam:

Tension prevails at Rameswaram and Pamban over the killing of the two Indian fishermen, Soosainayagam and Alphonso, by Sri Lanka navy personnel.

Ex-Industries Minister Cyril Mathew making a statement in Parliament says that if the majority Sinhala Buddhists were to live with self-respect, they would have to "not only die but also kill in that process". He describes as a "very serious and unparadonable crime on the part of the authorities" to have allowed what he called "Tamil insurgent mad dogs" multiply over the years.

Armed forces conduct search in Kupplan, Veeramunai areas in Jaffna. Middle-aged familied man shot dead and several Tamil youths arrested.

Ferry service between Rameswaram and Talaimannar postponed indefinitely in view of the "situation prevailing at present in Sri Lanka" says S. Ramachandran, Manager of the Shipping Corporation of India.

Senior police officer in Jaffna says Sri Lankan Air force helicopters had opened fire on Indian fishing vessels within Sri Lanka waters. Meanwhile, a PTI report from Madurai says, an Indian naval ship and coast Guard vessel were patrolling the seas off Rameswaram and Pamban to protect Indian fishermen. AIADMK General Secretary P.U. Shanmugam telegraphs Rajiv Gandhi urging that an Indian naval patrol be posted permanently near Rameswaram. Sri Lanka High Commission in New Delhi denies that Sri Lankan naval boats killed two Indian fisherman.

A leading Liberation Tiger Commander, Captain P. Raveendran (Pandithar) killed in action at Atchuveli in Jaffna in the course of an armed engagement between government security forces and Tiger guerrillas 4 other young liberation fighters also killed, when large contingent of armed forces with heavy weapons suddenly surround an LTTE base at Atchuveli. 10 other liberation fighters escape to safety after combat against an estimated 500 soldiers, lasting several hours. While several soldiers were injured, none of the Tigers was captured. Captain Raveendran who joined the Tiger moment in 1977 was 24 years old. A senior army officer admits in Colombo "This is the biggest operation we have done for a long time and it has been most successful".

Sri Lanka gun boat with a crew of seven captained Lt. Gunatilaka chased and seized by Indian Coast Guard ship in Indian territorial waters. Found on the gun boat were light machine guns, self-loading rifles and other arms, along with the prawn catch seized by the Sri Lankan navy men from the Indian fisherman. All seven crew brought to Ramnad police station and interrogated. While Indian issues strong protest on intrusion of Sri Lanka gun boat into Indian waters in New Delhi, the Sri Lanka government denies the charge and calls for return of seized boat. Sri Lanka crew later taken to Madurai in the night amid tight security.

TULF leader M. Sivasithamparam who had been living in Jaffna describes it "as a voritable jail" in an interview in Madras.

Captured Sri Lanka boat crew interrogated. Boat captain, Lt. Gunatilaka who was trained in Cochin, in India says that 15 Sri Lankan vessels were patrolling the seas between Sri Lanka and India.

More Coast Guard vessels to be sent to Rameswaram area.

T.U.L.F. delegation consisting of President M. Sivasithamparam, Secretary General Amirthalingam and Sampanthan meet G. Parthasarathy in New Delhi.

Commonwealth Secretary General Shridath Ramphal offers to meadiate in Sri Lankan problem.

President Jayewardene invites Tamil militants to contest by-Elections and start political dialogue.

In Colombo Mrs. Bandaranaike charges the government with killing and harassing innocent Tamils is the name of wiping terrorism.

Memorial Service for Tamil priest Fr. Mary Bastian killed by armed forces, held at Bostan USA.

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January Diary

Government Terrorism and Liberation Struggle in Tamil Eelam:

January 13

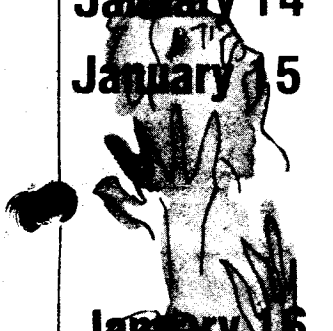
New Delhi report says Chinese Foreign Minister Wu Xiu Quain will be visiting Sri Lanka in the last week of this month

January 14

Army blow up five culverts in the north — on Thaipongal day — to prepare for the opening of new army oamps.

January 15

Defence Ministry in Colombo says that the culverts were blown up by 'terrorists .



January 16

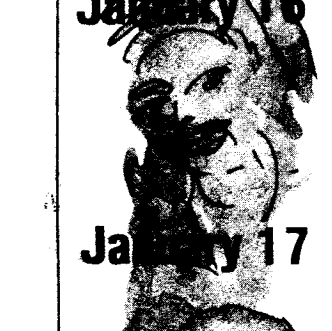
In Colombo, National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali claims that the Roman Catholic Priest Fr. Mary Bastian killed by the army 10 days earlier had escaped to India with Tamil Separatists!

In Madras, Communist leader Kalyanasundaram threatens a massive fisherman's boat march to Kachchativu.

In Colombo, the State Ministry claims killing 15 Tamil militants including two women in a raid on a militant hide-out at Mullaitivu. The Ministry also said a soldier was killed.

In New Delhi, Sri Lanka High Commissioner Bernard Tillekeratne called on Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

At Rameswaram. Communist leader Kalyanasundaran calls on India to reconsider Kachchativu agreement with Sri Lanka.



January 17

Sri Lanka government sends two senior police officials on a "wild goose mission" to Brussels following an unconfirmed report that TELO leader Sri Sabaratnam has been arrested in the Belgium capital carrying false travel documents.

A Colombo report says Customs have detained a 460,000 dollar air plane brought into the country by a Tamil businessman of Old Moor Street. The plane had arrived in a container from Houston. USA.

January 18

In Madras, TELO denies that its leader Sri Sabaratnam had been arrested in Belgium.

It is now officially known that S. Thondaman President of the Ceylon Workers Congress had met Rajiv Gandhi on January 13th.

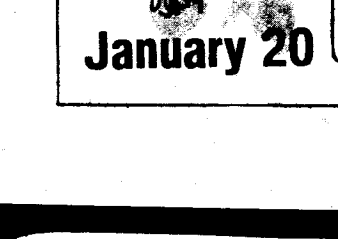
Report from Colombo says that prominent Lankan political scientist Prof. Ralph Bultjens had Scoffed at the idea that the United States would run to the aid of Sri Lanka at the expense of friendship with India.

Lalith Athulathmudali re-iterates at Colombo press Conference that 30,000 Sinhalese families will be settled in the pre dominantly Tamil north-east with total protection. The Minister also said, that "It is possible that terrorists have killed Indian fisherman in Indian teritorial waters to shift the blame to Sri Lanka security forces".

January 19

Sri Lanka army suffers the biggest loss since it launched the war on Tamil "Terrorism" Not less than 200 soldiers are believed killed, when Tamil militants who belong to TELO blow up Colombo-bound Yal Devi train at about 8.30 p.m. at Murikandy about 70 k.m. from Jaffna. 12 bogies were blown up by militants who also followed up with an attack with hand grenades and gun fire. A large haul of weapons were also recovered. Militants also recovered a large amount of jewellary, apparently robbed from Tamils, on the bodies of the dead soldiers.

The same night, near Umayalpuram a further 40 soldiers were estimated killed when they tried to reach the scene of the train disaster.



January 20

A senior government spokesman in Colombo who declined to be identified says death toll in the Murikandy train attack was at least 33. including 22 soldiers, accprding to AP correspondent in Colombo He also said 25 of the injured who were hospitalised at Anuradhapura were soldiers. He also admits death toll "might run higher because of serious injuries sustained by other passengers in the blast which ripped through 11 carriages of the train".

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January Diary

Government Terrorism and Liberation Struggle in Tamil Eelam:

January 21

UNI reports from Colombo that Sri Lanka government has imposed a blanket ban on Indian journalists visiting that country. A similar ban was made earlier following attack on Chavakachcheri Police Station.

Dutch government deports 45 young Tamils to Sri Lanka., violating the understanding with the office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.

January 22

17 Indian fishermen charged in a Colombo court and trial fixed for February 6.

Indian fisherman Anthonyadimai admitted to Ramanathapuram hospital after being beaten up by Sri Lanka navy men.

Official in Colombo say that death toll in Murikandy train attack goes up to 38, and because of the complete destruction of the rail track it will be very difficult to send essential foodstuffs and fuel to Jaffna.

January 23

Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi speaking in the Lok Sabha expresses unhappiness over the manner the security forces had been deployed by Sri Lankan authorities.

January 24

Chinese Foreign Minister Wu Xue Qian arrives in Colombo on 3-day visit.

Three Policemen killed and two others injured when landmine blasts jeep in which they were travelling in East Sri Lanka according to government sources.

A small plane, believed to be a military craft forcelands at Palaly airport following an attack on it by Tamil militants But army authorities in Jaffna later say it was a helicopter not a plane and it landed with "slight damage" at the airport. Following incident, heavy reprisals by armed forces in Palaly and adjoining villages. Panic and tension in the outlying areas.

India releases Sri Lankan naval boat and crew in exchange for the 17 Indian fishing boat skippers facing charges in Colombo causing disappointment among Sri Lanka Tamils and Tamilnadu fishermen.

Lalith Athulathmudali in Washington on a sudden unscheduled visit. Officials in Colombo deny that Sri Lanka was seeking extra arms from U.S.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wu Xue Quian quoted as saying in Colombo that China stood by the unity of Sri Lanka.

Batticaloa Police claim killing four Tamil militants and capturing 10 others after a gun battle.

TULF leader Amirthalingam terms government's decision to hold by-elections in 4 Tamil constituencies as a "farce and a fraud" and appeals a Tamils not to participate.

Sri Lanka state of emergency first declared in May 1983 and continuously revived, extended for further 30 days.

January 26

Chinese Foreign Minister concluding his 3-day visit says in Colombo that Chinese arms supplies to Sri Lanka were not discussed.

January 27

President Jayawardene sends Foreign Minister Shahul Hameed to Britain and France.

Colombo newspaper "Weekend" says Sri Lankan Police team had identified that the man arrested by Belgian Police was TELO leader Sri Sabaratnam!

Civil aviation aerodrome at Uchipuli near Ramanathapuram in Tamilnadu handed over to Indian Navy authorities for development as a naval air base.

A TELO Press not from Madras calls the government claim that its leader Sri Sabaratnam was captured in Belgium "baseless and wholesale fiction"

January 28

In Colombo, ruling UNP working committee accuses India of "de facto invasion" of Sri Lanka by using Tamil guerillas.

In Belgium, officials say that the Sri Lankan Tamil arrested by the Belgian authorities was not the Tamil liberation leader they had earlier suspected to be. Sri Lankan Police officials return to Colombo after a foreign stay at the taxpayers' expense.

January 30

"What is going on there (Sri Lanka) is terrible". says Rajiv Gandhi in an interview with an Indian fortnightly in New Delhi.

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February Diary:

Government Terrorism and Liberation Struggle in Tamil Eelam

February 1: A.J. Seniviratna named as new Deputy High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in Madras, in place of S. Piyasena.

Government claims killing of two key figures of Tamil militant groups in the north.

February 2: Ceylon Workers Congress Executive committee meeting presided by S. Thondaman says "The attitude adopted by the government... has given rise to the fear that the government no longer wants a democratic political settlement, but to impose its will by a harsh military operation." Committee calls upon government to abandon the dangerous proposal to settle armed Sinhalese in Tamil areas.

February 3: Ten gun boats costing £ 1.3 million each to be acquired by Sri Lanka from Britain, according to a London report.

"We shall overcome the menace of terrorism" says President Jayawardene on eve of Independence Day.

February 4: Sri Lanka celebrates Independence Day without the traditional parade of armed forces.

In Jaffna, army fires at a car carrying a pregnant woman, her husband and a neighbour to the hospital. The car was flying a white flag at the time of the incident. Driver Ramasamy (65) killed and all three occupants injured. The pregnant woman, 21 year old Vijayaluxmy later gives birth to a son.

Tamil militants pull down lion flags hoisted on government buildings in Jaffna. A youth who tried to remove the flag on the Central Post office building escapes after being wounded by army fire. An army battalion, keeps watch over the flag for rest of the day.

25 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees arrive by boat at Vetharaniam.

In Trincomalee district, government claims killing 6 "Tamil Separatists".

February 6: In Jaffna attempt by Tamil militants to blow up a Sri Lanka Air force helicopter by a rocket, fails. A military spokesman says that the rocket had fallen about 18 meters short of the 12-seater, Bell C-212 helicopter soon after landing at Gurunagar army camp with passengers and cargo.

February 8: Sri Lanka Minister Lalith Athulathmudali arrives in New Delhi and has hour-long meeting with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. New Delhi report says he has come with no fresh ideas.

Colombo report says that Kankesanthurai cement factory would have to remain closed for at least 6 months until a testing of the machinery is done.

February 9: A Colombo-bound Zaire Air ways cargo plane with a full load of arms and ammunition bearing Portuguese marks detained at Trivandrum Airport. The plane on a flight from Amman to Colombo was obviously carrying the arms for use against Tamils. The member crew of the D C-8 Aircraft had sought permission to land as it had run out of fuel.

500 families of Tamil fisherman from Pesalai village in Mannar comprising about 2000 members including about 1000 women and children had arrived at Rameswaram in plastic fishing boats, over the past four days, according to a Madurai report. They had said they were unable to "bear the torture by the Sri Lankan army police and Sinhalese hoodlums".

February 10 Indian government releases the arms-carrying Zaire aircraft and plane lands at Katunayake airport.

February 11 In Colombo, President Jayawardene sets up a joint Operations Council with himself as Chairman to direct security operations. Army Commander Tissa Indika Weerathunga elevated to new post of General Officer Commanding, Joint Operations. Brigadier Nalin Seneviratne who was directly in charge in Jaffna promoted Major-General and appointed Army Commander.

According to reports reaching Colombo, Tamil Militants blast approach road to Gurunagar army camp in Jaffna making movements of security forces difficult. According to PTI air force helicopters were trying to reach the camp, the second biggest in the province. Reports from Jaffna army men go on rampage in Gurunagar area making people flee their homes. Jaffna wore a deserted look.

Indian government prepares to meet massive inflow of Tamil refugees at Mandapam Transit Camp.

In London, the Times reports that 32 Tamils were shot dead in cold blood, some in front of their wives and children in the Mannar area.

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February Diary:

Government Terrorism and Liberation Struggle in Tamil Eelam

February 12:

Three British media peoples, Nicholas Coleridge Michael Zalanchas and Peter Joubenal arrested and detained in Colombo for "taking unauthorised pictures near military installations" in the north.

University students begin agitation in Colombo against proposed University Bill. 3000-strong procession including young Buddhist monks baton-charged by police.

Rameswaram fishermen Shekar (26) shot at by Sri Lankan navy boat. Refugee influx at Rameswaram keeps on increasing.

February 13:

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam attack army camp at Kokillai in the Mullaitivu district. According to a LTTE press release issued on 21/2/85, 106 Sinhala soldiers were killed, and at least 25 seriously wounded. "On our side", says the release" 16 freedom fighters were martyred and 9 injured. In the mean time a military convoy of reinforcements rushing to the scene of the battle was ambushed at Nayaru Tiger guerrillas detonated land mines, killing 28 soldiers and destroying military vehicles. As a consequence of these attacks the army camps at Kokillai and Thiriyai were closed down and the military personnel transferred to the main camp at Pathaviya."

Student violence breaks out again in Colombo. Police riot squads brought in.

Sri Lankan naval base at Karainagar attacked on February 11th, according to a press release issued by EPRLE. Over 100 navy men were killed and some gun boats destroyed after a three hour gun battle according to the release. Simultaneously approach roads from Gurunagar and Palali Army camps were also blasted by land mines preventing army mobility. The attack was claimed by the military wing of the EPRLF the People's Liberation Army.

In New Delhi Sri Lanka High Commission described as "totally false" the London Times reports of the massacre of 32 civilians in Mannar.

Communist Party of India denounces genocide by Sri Lankan army.

In New York the Christian Science Monitor says, the battle between Tamil separatists and the Sri Lankan army si sliding into a civil war.

February 14:

Two Indian fishermen, Anandan (25) Anthony (27) killed by Sri Lankan navy off Rameswaram.

Total number of refugees at Mandapam transit camp swells to nearly three thousand.

London Times reports that 10,000 Tamils in villages adjoining Mullaitivu forced to flee their homes by security forces.

February 15:

India lodges strong protest with Sri Lanka over killing of Indian fishermen.

About 400 more Tamil refugees arrive at Rameswaram.

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi says in Hyderabad "Three is no question of the Indian army moving into Sri Lanka". He makes this statement at a press conference at the air port when asked to comment on TULF Leader Amirthalingam's suggestion for a "Bangladesh — type of operation in Sri Lanka"

In Colombo Lalith Athulathmudali claims that 52 Tamil separatists were killed in a raid on a jungle hide-out in Mullaitivu area. He was actually referring to the killing of more than 52 innocent civilians by armed forces as a reprisal for the Tiger attack at Kokilai army camp.

February 16:

Refugee influx continues. Over 3200 at the Mandapam camp alone. Tamil Nadu government sanctions Rs. 5 lakh for constructing shelters.

February 17:

In London, Sri Lankan Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel seeks British government credits for purchase of arms.

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February Diary:

Government Terrorism and Liberation Struggle in Tamil Eelam

Fe[illegible]8:	In Colombo, 3 British media people released after being detained for a week. Foreign Minister Hameed suggests joint patrol of the waters between the two countries by Indian and Sri Lankan navy. The proposed Voice of America station in Sri Lanka will be a perfect cover for a planned secret Communication Centre and an electronic listening post for the United States navy, says Colombo journel Forum.
[illegible]9:	Firing by Sri Lankan naval personnel on fleeing Tamils alleged. Three decomposed bodies of men believed to be those of Sri Lankan Tamils found washed ashore at Rameswaram.
F[illegible]20:	In Colombo, Sri Lanka cabinet discuss Amirthalingam's call for Indian military intervention. In Vavuniya, Sri Lanka Army opens fire on people at bus stand and kills Jaffna undergraduate and injures two others.
Fe[illegible]21:	In Colombo, leader of Nava Sama Samaja Party, Vasudeva Nanayakkara arrested in connection with student agitation. In Madurai about 1000 students of Yadava College protest against killing of Tamils in Sri Lanka. In London "Jane's Defence Weekly" reports the Sri Lanka has purchased from Israel two twin-engined double Aluminium hull "Dubar" coastal patrol craft, equipped to carry missiles. 1000 Sri Lankan students protest in Colombo against new University rules. Leader of Opposition Anura Bandaranaike demands arrest of Amirthalingam. Madurai report says refugee flow crosses the 6000-mark.
[illegible]22:	In Washington US administration rejects a military solution Sri Lanka, and calls for resumption of political dialogue. In Madurai 314 more Tamil refugees arrive and tally goes up nearly 7000.
	Government agent of Mullaitivu K. Gnanachandran kidnapped by Tamil militants and killed on various charges of acting against the interests of the people.
F[illegible]28:	Sri Lanka High Commissioner in New Delhi summoned to Colombo. Medical teams posted at Rameswaram and Mandapam refugee camps. Colleges in Madurai ordered to be closed until March 3 in view of student agitation on the Sri Lankan Tamil issue. In Washington, National Council of Churches expresses serious concern over the situation concerning the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka.
[illegible]24:	Group of Tamils stage demonstration upsetting Sri Lankan participation in international tourism fair at Hamburg, West Germany.
[illegible]:	India announces diplomatic change in Colombo. J.N. Dixit, now envoy in Kabul to replace Chhatwal.
[illegible]27:	Sri Lankan Tamil refugee influx crosses the 10,000 mark. Sri Lankan govt. claims killing another 4 "separatists" at Kankesanturai. Athulathmudali says fishing ban in northern prohibited zone will be relaxed next month.
	30 more boat loads of refugees arrive at Rameswaram Sri Lanka Cabinet spokesman Anandatissa de Alwis says in Colombo that refugee figures are exaggerated, Athulathmudali says "terrorists" are forcing the people to flee.

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SINHALA PARTY ADVOCATES DECENTRALIZATION OF POWER

Son-in-law wants in 1985 what father-in-law tore up in 1958:

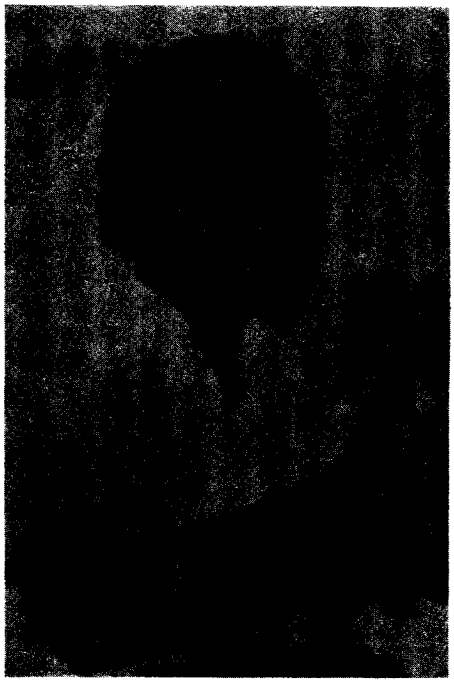
The Sri Lanka government's fruitless "war against terrorism" is at last bringing a change in the political will of the Sinhala people. One influential Sinhala party has now come out openly in favour of decentralization as the basis for an ethnic settlement — the Sri Lanka Mahajana Party (SLMP) led by film idol Vijaya Kumaranatunga. Mr. Kumaranatunga is the son-in-law of two former Prime Ministers, Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike and Mrs. Srima Bandaranaike and estranged brother-in-law of present Leader of the Opposition Anura Bandaranaike.

In a statement issued in Colombo recently, Vijaya Kumaranatunga advocates going back to the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact, popularly known as the B-C Pact, which was tabled in the Ceylon Parliament on 26 July 1957 and abrogated later by Prime Minister Bandaranaike under pressure from chauvinist Buddhist monks.

As to whether a wise solution unwisely discarded then, would still hold good after 27 years of a worsening ethnic gulf, is another matter altogether. But the significance of the SLMP stand cannot be ignored because this is the first time any Sinhala party in Sri Lanka, other than a Marxist one, has supported the concept of a devolution of power and a virtual recognition of "Tamil areas". The Regional Councils proposed under the B-C Pact were to be invested with the powers to select candidates for colonization schemes.

Walter Schwartz, writing on "The Tamils of Sri Lanka" (Minority Rights Group Report No 25) said: "...The pact... embodied one of the few statesmanlike compromises between two extreme positions ever to be attempted in Sri Lanka. Had it been carried out it would, as the Prime Minister later claimed, "safeguard the position of the Sinhalese While, at the same time, meet the reasonable fears of the Tamils!

Mr Kumaranatunga says in his statement:—



"Communalism has dominated politics in Sri Lanka ever since the introduction of universal franchise in 1931. One consequence of this trend has been the gradual separation of the Sri Lankan Tamil minority from the Sinhala majority — politically, socially, economically and geographically. The question we have to face today is whether the Tamils can be held within a single Sri Lanka State for much longer.

"Among the Sinhala people, the UNP and SLFP have constantly viewed with each other in exploiting Sinhala communalism for electoral gain. They are doing it even in this hour of grave crisis. Since 1956, each of these two parties, when in opposition, has effectively obstructed the efforts of the other in power, to solve the ethnic problem by negotiation.

"Among the Tamils, the TULF emerged as the principal communal party by 1975 It proclaimed in 1976 that its aim was to win a separate State of Tamil Eelam by non-violent means. Almost concurrently a militant movement of Tamil youth, pursuing the same goal by violent means if necessary, also arose. This movement, divided into several factions, now seems to dominate politics in the North.

"The net result of the communal politics of the UNP, SLFP and TULF has been the murderous communal war now being fought in the North of Sri Lanka and on the international political screen. The pity of it is that the victims in this war are not those who have benefitted from communal politics.

"After unpardonable procrastination President J.R. Jayawardene recently presented draft legislation designed to settle the gravest crisis in our modern history. The TULF expressed its dissatisfaction about the adequacy of the devolution of power implicit in the draft legislation. Predictably, the SLFP categorically rejected it (because being in the opposition, it is now its turn to obstruct a negotiated settlement.) Thereupon, the Government withdrew the draft legislation. Thus history repeated itself. Little do the young men in the front line of battle, staring down their severed limbs or holding their entrails in their hands, realise that they are paying with their wasted lives for the greed, vanity, rivalry and lust for power of their elderly leaders"

"Is there no way out of this tragedy? I have spent a great deal of time in the recent past trying to understand the nature of our ethnic crisis and why previous attempts at solving it by negotiation have failed. I have discussed the subject with all sorts of people — ordinary, learned, religious, political, communal-minded, liberal and so on. I now feel that certain essential steps must be taken if we are to resolve our ethnic crisis.

"I am convinced that a military solution to our ethnic problem will be neither satisfactory nor just. Attempts at imposing such a solution will be both brutal and

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The late Tamil leader S.J.V. Chelvanayakam

self-defeating. As the first step, I think the Tamil leaders, especially of the younger generation, must declare unambiguously even as I do, that they believe in the possibility of a negotiated political solution."

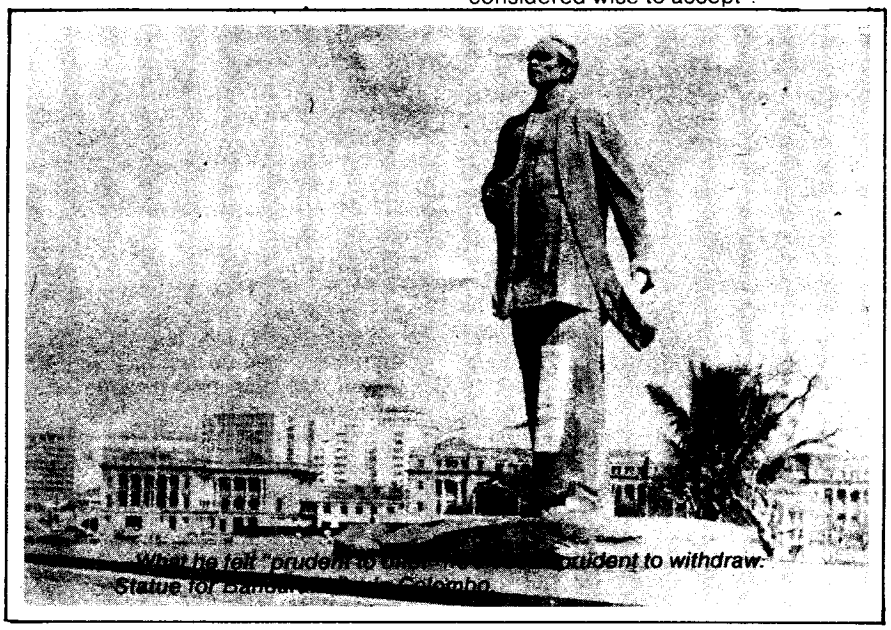
"Once the belief in the possibility of a peaceful and just solution takes hold of our minds, it will become possible to take the next step, namely, to stop the tragic and senseless destruction of life and property. This will necessarily require negotiations with the militants, who have shown a remarkable willingness to die for their cause. As early as possible the maintenance of law and order in the Northern and Eastern provinces should be entrusted to a mutually acceptable peace-keeping force. The use of the armed forces for pursuing political objectives must cease. Experience has shown that the powers of arrest, search, seizure and interrogation given to the security forces by the Prevention of Terrorism Act can be easily abused and they must be substantially restricted."

"The struggle of the Tamil people for their aspirations is no longer a purely domestic issue. The strong cross-border cultural ties between South India and Northern Sri Lanka are a geopolitical reality which neither New Delhi nor the Sinhala people can ignore. It is indeed fortunate that India has constantly urged a negotiated political solution within the framework of a unitary Sri Lanka. There is much to be gained therefore by involving newly-elected, young, pragmatic Rajiv Gandhi in the negotiating process. Particularly is this so because the U.S. with which Sri Lanka has close relations seems to be inclined to establish even closer relations with Rajiv Gandhi.

"The most important step in resolving our ethnic crisis is to decide upon a mutually acceptable basis for working out a negotiated solution. The more I have thought about the matter, the more I have become persuaded that the compromise solution worked out by Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike and Mr. S.J.V. Chelvanayakam in 1957 still provides the soundest basis for a mutually acceptable and workable solution."

"The agreement covered four areas of conflict — devolution of power, language rights, colonisation of the traditional Tamil speaking areas and citizenship laws affecting the Indian Tamil estate population. Circumstance has forced successive Governments to implement some of the solutions proposed in that agreement. That is the best test of their validity. For example, as in the B-C agreement, so in the 1978 constitution, Tamil has been made a national language. Unfortunately the full impact of the solutions has not been realised because very often they have been applied only half-heartedly."

"According to Professor A.J. Wilson in regard to the devolution of power, Mr. Chelvanayakam demanded federation but agreed to accept a scheme which offered a single regional council for the Northern province and two or more for the Eastern. It is my firm conviction that the only feasible way available at present to the Sinhala people to preserve a unitary and united Sri Lanka is to offer to the Tamil people by way of devolution of power, what Mr. Bandaranaike considered prudent to offer and Mr. Chelvanayakam considered wise to accept".



What he felt "prudent to ... prudent to withdraw:
Statue for Bandar... Colombo

Army bomb house at Nallur

Nallur Cross Road is a quite residential road close to the Nallur Kanthaswami Temple in Jaffna. The usual calm was shattered however at mid-day on Tuesday 19th February when army trucks descended in a battalion and went straight in the direction of a particular house tucked well off the road. Two huge explosions followed leaving not only the house in ruins, but causing cracks in adjoining houses and leaving the residents of the entire area in a panic. Locked doors in nearby houses flung open as a result of the vibration, roadside walls of some houses cracked, and several residents who fled in fear sustained injuries. A heart patient, a male resident of a road nearby, the Kachcheri-Nallur Road, collapsed and died. The house belonged to Mr. Tharmasangari, a brother of ex-MP for Kilinochchi Mr. Anandasangari, but the owners who were abroad were not in occupation of the house. It was reported that the reason for the army attack was that some "anti-social" element had falsely tipped off the army that the house was used in the nights by "terrorists".

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The Sri Lanka link : Has Israel lost on the deal ?

by Netanel Lorch

The author established the Israel legation in Colombo, and served as Charge d' affaires from 1958-60.

LIKE MOST Israelis, I received the news concerning the renewal of diplomatic relations with Sri Lanka with satisfaction. Any broadening of Israel's diplomatic network is welcome news, not only for its own, political, sake, but also as a vehicle for contacts in other fields — economic, cultural, tourist et al.

This is particularly true in the Asian continent. We are perched on its western rim, and yet — in the wide belt between Israel and Burma — there is a gaping diplomatic vacuum, apart from the embassy in Nepal and the toe-hold of a consulate in Bombay.

Ceylon, as it was then called, had "suspended" relations with Israel — officially it never broke them, although the term suspension does not have any other meaning — for reasons of its own, in 1970. This happened not because of any act committed or omitted by Israel detrimental to its interest, but because the prime minister at the time, Mrs. Bandaranaike, considered such a move advantageous for securing the support of the Moslem minority on the island, and possibly also because of misplaced expectations of Arab economic and financial support.

There were many at the time who opposed this move. One influential Ceylonese friend observed to me that during the preceding election campaign, Bandaranaike had made two promises — to reduce the price of rice, the staple food of the island, and to break relations with Israel. Of the two, she found that the latter would be much cheaper.

ONE OF those who tried to influence the government in Colombo against taking this step, strangely enough, was the Egyptian ambassador.

For some years before, a Ceylonese, Mr. Shirley Amerasinghe, had chaired the three-member UN Commission on Human Rights in the Occupied Territories. The remaining two members were from Somalia and Yugoslavia, neither of which is represented in Israel. Israel's representative at the UN utilized this as an argument, demonstrating the basic imbalance and partiality of the commission.

The Egyptian ambassador realized that the severance of diplomatic ties by Ceylon would serve as grist to Israel's mill.

In any case, Israel had not damaged Sri Lanka in any way, which in the normal course of international relations is the only valid ground for breaking diplomatic relations. It was welcome news that the wrong done to Israel would now be righted.

But as more details emerged, in publications in Colombo and subsequently in Washington the initial satisfaction soured.

It was revealed that Israel would only be permitted an interest section — within an existing embassy, a form of diplomatic representation practised even between countries in a state of war, which has little or no political function or significance.

The embassy in question would be that of the United States. Without any lack of respect for the U.S. This was seen as implying some political message — one which, in the eyes of the present Sri Lanka government, may be favourable, but in those of its successor may have the opposite effect.

TO BE perceived in a Third World country as a friend and an ally of the U.S. is one thing; to appear as its protege is another. Neither the U.S. nor Israel has ever derived benefit from the perception — or misperception — of a patron-client relationship.

Finally, the foreign minister of Sri Lanka announced publicly that in return Israel would help to eradicate the Tamil terrorists in the north of the country.

The result of this announcement was to be foreseen. Not only did Arab governments protest against this rather modest move towards the re-establishment of diplomatic relations — and some of the Moslems in Sri Lanka duly echoed these protests — but there were outcries from the Tamil community — and not only those idologically, or otherwise, identified with the underground.

It is true that Israel, as one of its first victims, has a vested interest in combating international terrorism. It is also true that in the course of many years of continuous struggle it has gained valuable experience and developed original strategies and tactics to combat terrorists, which can be of immense helkp to other governments faced with a similar problem.

To put this experience at the disposal of other governments may, under certain circumstances, be in Israel's interest. However, that is by no means necessarily true in the case of all governments, and under all circumstances.

In the case of Sri Lanka, it would seem that — if the information is true, and to the best of my knowledge no denial has been forthcoming from Jerusalem — Israel is paying a high price indeed for a moderate return.

Relations between the Sinhalese, mostly Buddhist, majority — concentrated in the south and south-west of the island — and the Tamil Hindu minority in the north and east — has bedevilled Sri Lanka politics for many years, before and after independence in 1948.

It is complex in itself, and its complexity is compounded by the fact that in addition, there are millions of Tamil estate workers and their families in the heartland of Sinhalese Sri Lanka, and by the presence of about 40 million Tamils in the south of India, just across from Jaffna, on the other side of the Palk Straits.

Constitutional arrangements devised by the British during the period of self-rule were designed to guarantee the rights of both majority and minority.

Some ambitious Sinhalese politicians found fertile ground in the feelings of some members of the majority, by appealing to their anti-Tamil emotions. The Tamils are considered as frugal, hard-working and intelligent.

Under the British raj they had occupied a disproportionate share of positions in the public service. Bandaranaike had gained elections with his slogan of "Sinhalese only" — that is, Sinhalese as the only official language, which would automatically eliminate Tamils from the public service.

From time to time, violent outbursts in an otherwise tranquil country accentuated the inherent tensions. In 1958, pogroms were committed against Tamils — barely reported in the Western media, but on a scale and with a brutality which compare to the worst in the annals of the Jewish people.

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MANY TAMILS identified emotionally with the Jews. They are hard-working and industrious, yet they constitute a minority in all the countries in which they live — not only India and Sri Lanka but also further rest, in Malaysia and Singapore.

They viewed with admiration mixed with envy the feat of a small people which with tremendous effort and sacrifice, had succeeded in establishing its own independent state.

Israel representatives were, of course, aware of this empathy, but while maintaining good personal relations with representatives of all sectors, including Tamils, took care not to take sides or to identify with one of the parties in a crucial domestic struggle.

J.R. Jayawardene (known as J.R. long before Dallas was conceived), the incumbent president of Sri Lanka, went out of his way at the beginning of his term of office to accommodate what he considered legitimate Tamil demands.

Tamil ministers were included in his cabinet, and Tamils were given senior positions in the army and police. Tamil cultural autonomy in the north was confirmed, and permitted to expand.

The operations of the Tamil Tigers, initially a small underground, no doubt with connections across the straits in India, aiming at partition of the island and total independence for Tamil areas, therefore came at a time when Tamil fortunes were at a relatively high point, and J.R.'s suspicion that the underground was motivated and supported by elements which disagreed with other aspects of his policy — his pro-Western orientation, his encouragement of private enterprise — was probably well founded.

The possibility that Tamil guerrillas had been trained by the PLO cannot be excluded either. When Tamil guerrillas killed some Sinhalese soldiers in the north, widespread violent reaction followed in many parts of the island.

Dozens of Tamil prisoners were killed in one of the prisons in cold blood by their fellow inmates — according to an Amnesty International report — with the acquiescence, if not tacit approval, of prison officers.

Tamils were indiscriminately shot or harassed on several occasions. On the political level, Tamil MPs who were absent from parliament in Colombo for fear of their lives, were deprived of their seats, and some of them went into exile. Emergency regulations abolished the need for inquests in the case of unnatural deaths.

Tamils feel abandoned and helpless, and it would seem that more and more among them are now inclined to support full independence for the Tamil north as the only way to ensure the safety of their lives and property.

UNDER THESE circumstances, Israel's reported willingness to help train Sri Lanka — Sinhalese units — to combat terrorists, if it is true, will obviously be interpreted as an act of taking sides.

Israel will, by implication, be associated with the human rights record of the present Sri Lanka government, which, judging from reliable international sources, is questionable, to say the least.

Israel is bound to lose whatever sympathy it enjoys not only among the Tamils in Sri Lanka, but also amongst those in the big "Tamilstan" of India in the area around Madras.

It would seem that similar considerations prevailed in councils in Washington and London, and the U.S. and British governments are reluctant to extend help to the Sri Lankan government. Yet Israel is prepared to incur the losses.

WHAT DOES Israel stand to gain ? The Sri Lanka government has already publicly declared that it was not about to change its attitude on the Palestinian question. It has indicated that full diplomatic relations are not being contemplated.

Israel will therefore be left with an interest section — with all the diplomatic and other constraints pertaining to that status — a low return for a major investment.

Relations with Sri Lanka are definitely in Israel's interest. Sri Lanka has hurt Israel by suspending relations, and its is only right that they should be restored.

If Israel has to pay a price for such restoration, so be it. But not any price.

Agricultural cooperation, as stated in the laconic announcement made by the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem, seems proper and adequate.

But if active help in combating Tamil guerrillas in the north is part of the deal — and one must still hope that it is not — it must be clearly stated that the price is exorbitant, the return not commensurate, and that Israel's government would be well advised to reconsider its decision.

At the very least, it should be made clear that by sending a diplomat to Colombo, Israel has not committed itself to support Sri Lanka when human rights on that island will again be discussed in international forums, that Israel is not taking sides in an internal struggle and harbours no ill feelings towards the Tamils.

That much, at least, we owe to ourselves, to our dignity, to our character as a Jewish State, the State of the Jewish people, the majority of whom still live as minorities in many parts of the world.

(By courtesy : Jerusalem Post)

Quotable Quote

Professor Ralph Buultjens, the Sri Lankan-born, New York based political scientist has been shocking Colombo audiences in recent weeks. Addressing a Rotary meeting in Colombo, he said that trying to equate the Sri Lankan Foreign Service with the "seasoned Indian diplomats" in like "putting Kukul Charlie in the ring against Muhammed Ali".

Kukul Charlie is a small-time popular, entertainer in the liquor bar rounds in Colombo known for his mimicry.

Seapking to the same audience, Dr. Buultjens said that unless progress is made by Sri Lanka in seeking a solution to the ethnic problem, she will have to accept more intervention by India.

Nothing that there can be intervention without invasion, he said India could manipulate an increase in terrorist activity, release large stocks of Tea to the world market and influence the Minister for Rural Industrial Development, S. Thondaman.

Sri Lanka does not have many friends, he said. The belief that "we can antagonise and irritate India without serious consequences is a myth".

"If we believe in absurdities we will commit atrocities", he said, adding that today there are a large number of such absurdities which have infiltrated public thinking and have helped form public opinion.

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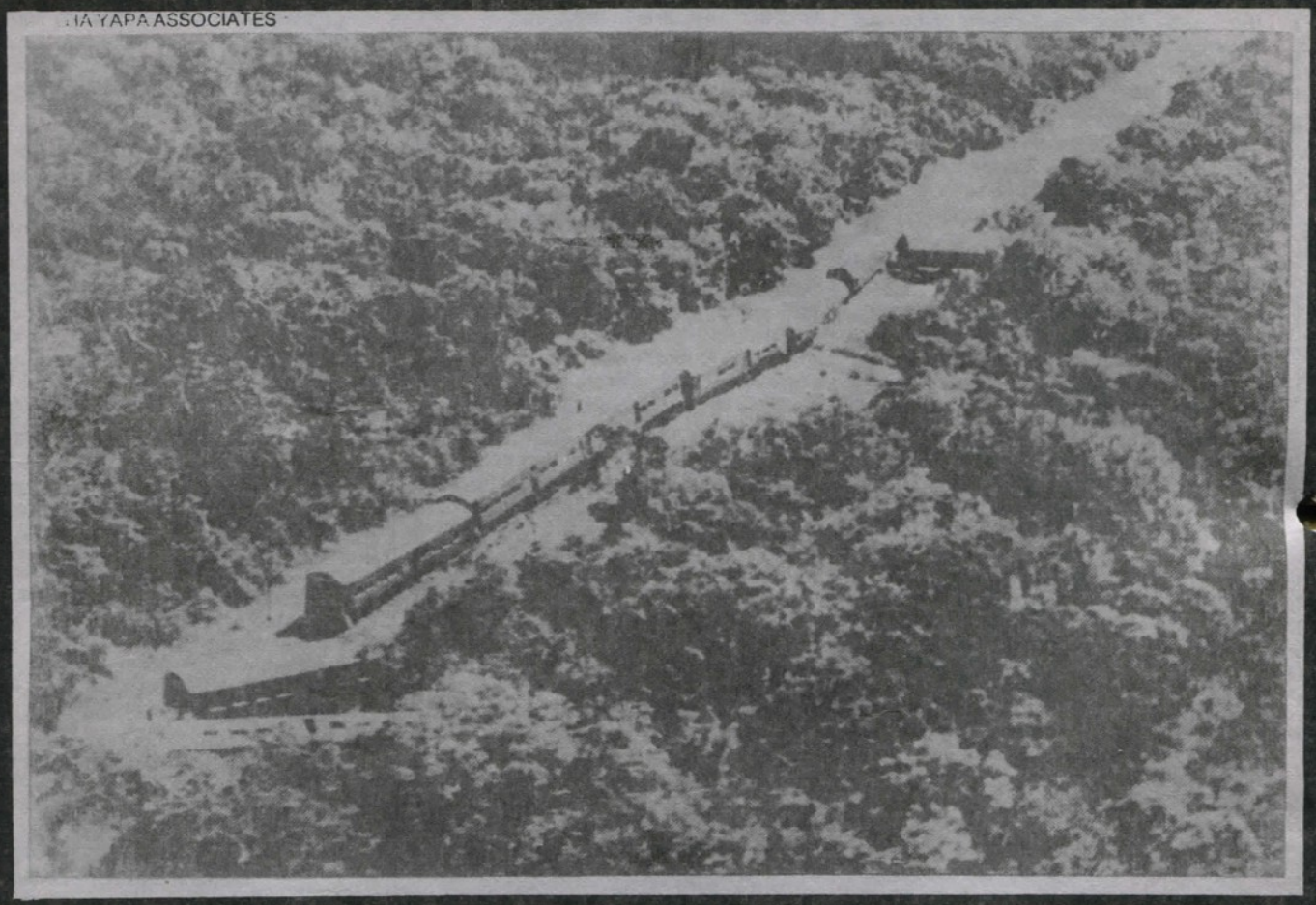
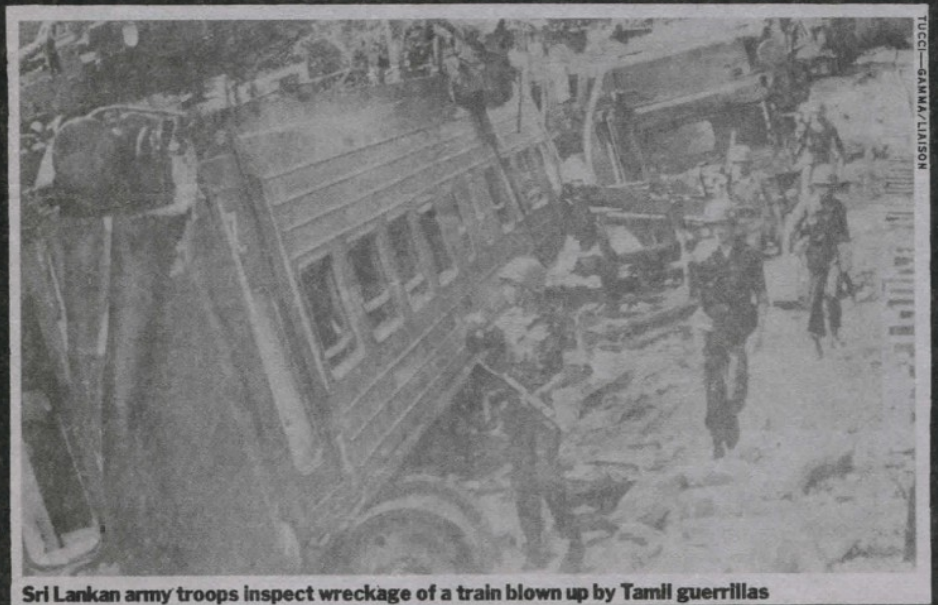


Was INDIA TODAY taken for a (train) ride ?



Sri Lankan army troops inspect wreckage of a train blown up by Tamil guerrillas

Look at the picture above. It is supposed to show "the train blown up by Tamil rebels in the north". Dilip Bobb who wrote an excellent, incisive report on Sri Lanka for INDIA TODAY (Paradise Lost: March 15) was apparently fed the picture by Vijitha Yapa Associates in Colombo. But does it look like a train, 12 carriages of which were blown off the track by land mines ? Look at the TIME magazine picture on the left. Even the compartment is upside down — note the figure 2. And then, look at OUR pictures on the right. How does one reconcile the Vijitha Yapa Associates photograph with the rest ? What are Vijitha Yapa Associates up to ? Did they "doctor" the picture, fake it or "cook" it up ?

Just shows how the Sri Lankan government, the Sri Lankan Radio and the Sri Lankan Press are taking the world for a ride !

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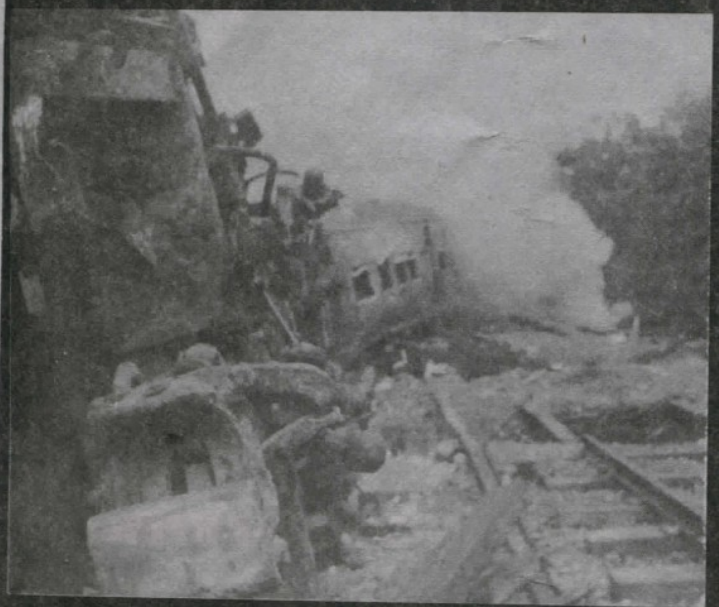

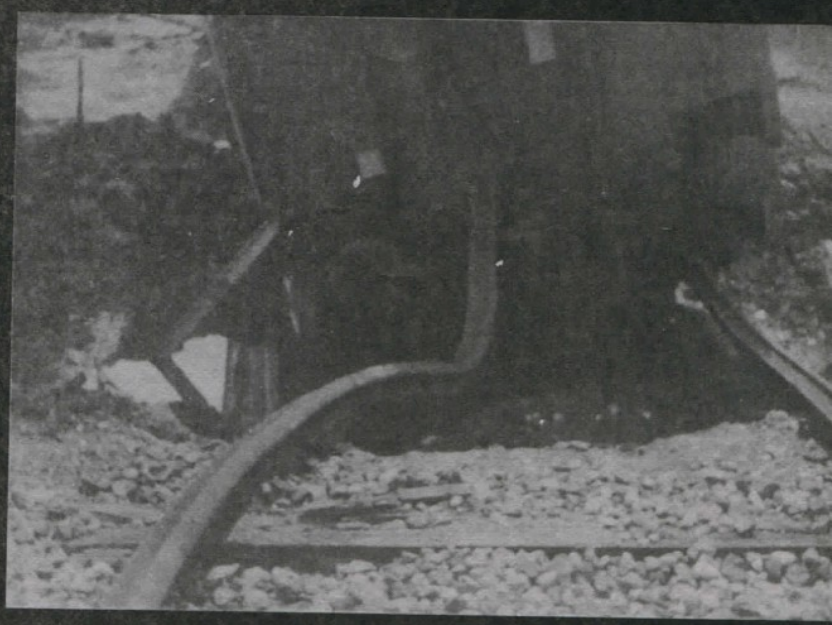

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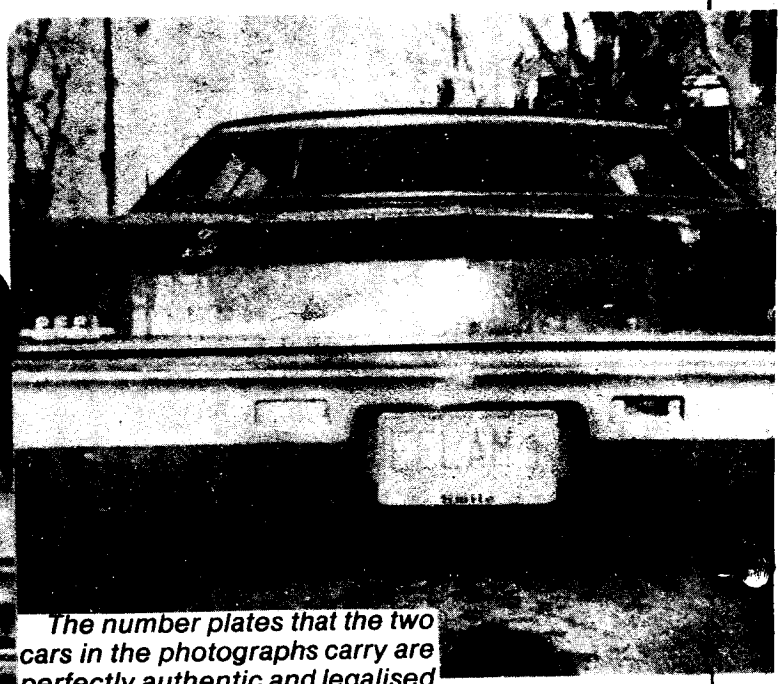
Cars with EELAM number plates on American roads!



The number plates that the two cars in the photographs carry are perfectly authentic and legalised ones: they are EELAM 1 and EELAM 4. They belong to two Tamil citizens living in the state of Massachussets, U.S.A. Under American traffic laws such registration is permitted subject to certain other conformities with the law.

What more do the Sri Lankan security forces need ?

The Sri Lankan security forces need more arms and more hands according to Brigadier Wanasinghe (see report elsewhere in this issue) We also know that they need other things besides — courage for example; skill; ability to stay put. But apparently they need lots of more things according to the government-run newspaper in Colombo, the Sunday Observer of March 3. Says the report:

"The Security Forces are urgently in need of:

Gunny Bags

Barbed wire; and Security lights in large quantities. We appeal to the public for donations of whatever quantities they can give. These could be handed over to the Sri Lanka Girl Guides Association Headquarters in Colombo. The Forces also require a garment manufacturer to turn out a large number of uniforms. We expect this to be done free or at a nominal charge".

Can any reader suggest why the security forces would need gunny bags in large quantities ?

A FAMILY CONVERSATION!

An imagined family conversation sent by Sinhala reader Jayantha Samarasinghe to Sri Lanka Communist Party paper FORWARD, and published in its issue of February 1:

"Thatha"!.

"Yes, Putha"

"Thatha, what's a terrorist?"

"Why Putha, a terrorist is anyone who gets in the way of a bullet fired by our glorious armed forces".

"But Thatha, some people say they are innocent by-standers"

"Nonsense, Putha. How can they be innocent if they are standing about when our glorious armed forces open fire ?

"It says in the paper that lots of them are shot while trying to escape"

"That's so, Putha"

"But why do they want to escape from our forces who are only to protect them?"

"Don't be silly, Putha. If they don't try to escape, how can they be shot ?"

"How many terrorists are there, Thatha?"

"Well, our glorious Minister Keith says that there are about a thousand, with four hundred of them armed"

"But Thatha, if they are so few, why is it necessary to declare war, buy expensive weapons abroad, get friendly Israelis, and give parts of our country to the Yankees?"

"You'll understand better when you're older"

"Thatha!"

"Yes Putha?"

"Why are we scolding the Indians ? Are they Tamils too ?"

"Some are. The rest are just as bad"

"But doesn't anyone like Indians or Tamils?"

"Only traitors"

"Who are these traitors, Thatha ?"

"Anyone who wants the killing of Tamils to stop"

"But Thatha, aren't we Buddhists ?"

"Of course, Putha!"

"Didn't Lord Buddha tell us not to kill and want all living things to be happy?"

"That doesn't include Tamils"

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The Eelam Boat People

It was the first week of February. First there was a trickle. Then began a steady flow and suddenly it became an avalanche of Tamil Eelam refugees, men, women and children landing off the Rameswaram coast, arriving in little fibre glass boats, in large motorised launches and in precarious country vessels. Daily they came by the hundreds and in the course of one month the refugee tally had topped the 15,000 mark, making an absolute mockery of the much-flaunted tough Sri Lankan naval surveillance on the northern coast.

The Indian media got on to the event fast. All daily newspapers, (including the editorially pro-Sri Lankan government inclined Indian Express), filled their columns with on-the-spot photographs and reports and interviews. Excellent editorial and photographic coverage came from all the reputed periodicals such as Illustrated Weekly of India, Sunday, The Week, India Today, and Herald Review.

Having obviously permitted the exodus initially, in order to de-populate Tamil areas, the Sri Lanka government did not know how to meet the adverse international publicity caused by the fleeing Tamils. Colombo first took the position that the Indian media was lying about the figures. But maligning the Indian media was just not good enough, because the international media was itself getting on to the truth. "Tamils are the world's newest boat people", said the headline in the Arab Times of February 26 of a report by Stephen R. Wilson. "Terror drives whole village to join Tamil boat exodus", said the London Times report of March 11, carrying a special despatch by Michael Hamlyn from Rameshwaram.

National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali thereafter changed the tune. He accepted the "exodus" but gave 3 reasons for it. According to the government-run Daily News of March 1, the Minister said: "Some 140 Tamils intercepted in the Palk Strait said they were fleeing for three reasons — threats from Tamil militant groups, the ban on fishing in the area, and fears of being caught in the fighting between the separatists and soldiers". For good measure, the Minister also said "that terrorists angered or disappointed by lack of positive action by the Indian government in support of their secessionist cause, were trying to create a refugee problem by compelling Tamils to cross over".

While it was really creditable that the Sri Lankan navy was able to intercept at least 140 out of the over-14,000 who crossed over, what the 140 are supposed to have told whoever it was, obviously something that should be told to the Marines!

K.P. Sunil, writing in the "Illustrated Weekly of India" (March 24) under the headline — EXODUS, opens his report thus:

"They are not human beings", wailed an aging woman. "They are brutes... worse than animals... maneaters..." "She was not airing a personal opinion. But voicing the sentiments of thousands of others, who, like her, have braved innumerable hazards during a perilous cross-over from the island republic of Sri Lanka to the more hospitable shores of India. They are Tamils. Sri Lankan citizens who have lived for ages on that country's soil. People with no roots here, now looking up to India for asylum on humanitarian grounds. Refugees from the violence and repression directed against them by the Sinhalese people and the Sri Lankan government through its security forces...

And what did the boat people tell K.P.Sunil ? Here are just a few of the excerpts: "I have lost my only relative. I will never go back. The place is a made house. The people are raving lunatics. If you people don't want us here in India, shoot us. Kill us. But please dont send us back" (Sarojini, a woman farm labourer)

"I shall go back when peace returns... You have to ensure that peace returns to our land. Our boys, the Tigers are fighting to make our land free..." (Yogaraj Nanattan, a well-to-do fisherman)

"Young (Tamil) men cannot walk the roads of Sri Lanka. They think all young Tamils are Tigers and terrorists. The Tigers are gaining in strength and the Sinhalese are terrified of them". (Eujeniu Kulas, 27-year old youth)

"They (the armed forces) are too scared to take on the Tigers. All the socalled terrorists shot by the police and army are actually innocent Tamil youths... You people will shudder at some of the atrocities and tortures perpetrated by those lunatics. They used to line up small school boys on the ground and trample them. And rejoice as the poor chaps scream and writhe in pain. Youths are herded into large gunny bags and sewn up. Then they pour petrol over the bundle and burn it along with its live contents. Women are beaten up mercilessly and gang-raped. After their lust has been satisfied they were shot like dogs...

(Dharmakulasingham, Journalist)

Quotable Quote

"... Dont believe a word of what they say over the Sri Lankan radio. Except the time mentioned at the beginning of a programme, all the rest are blatant lies"

— Boat refuge Dharmakulasingham.

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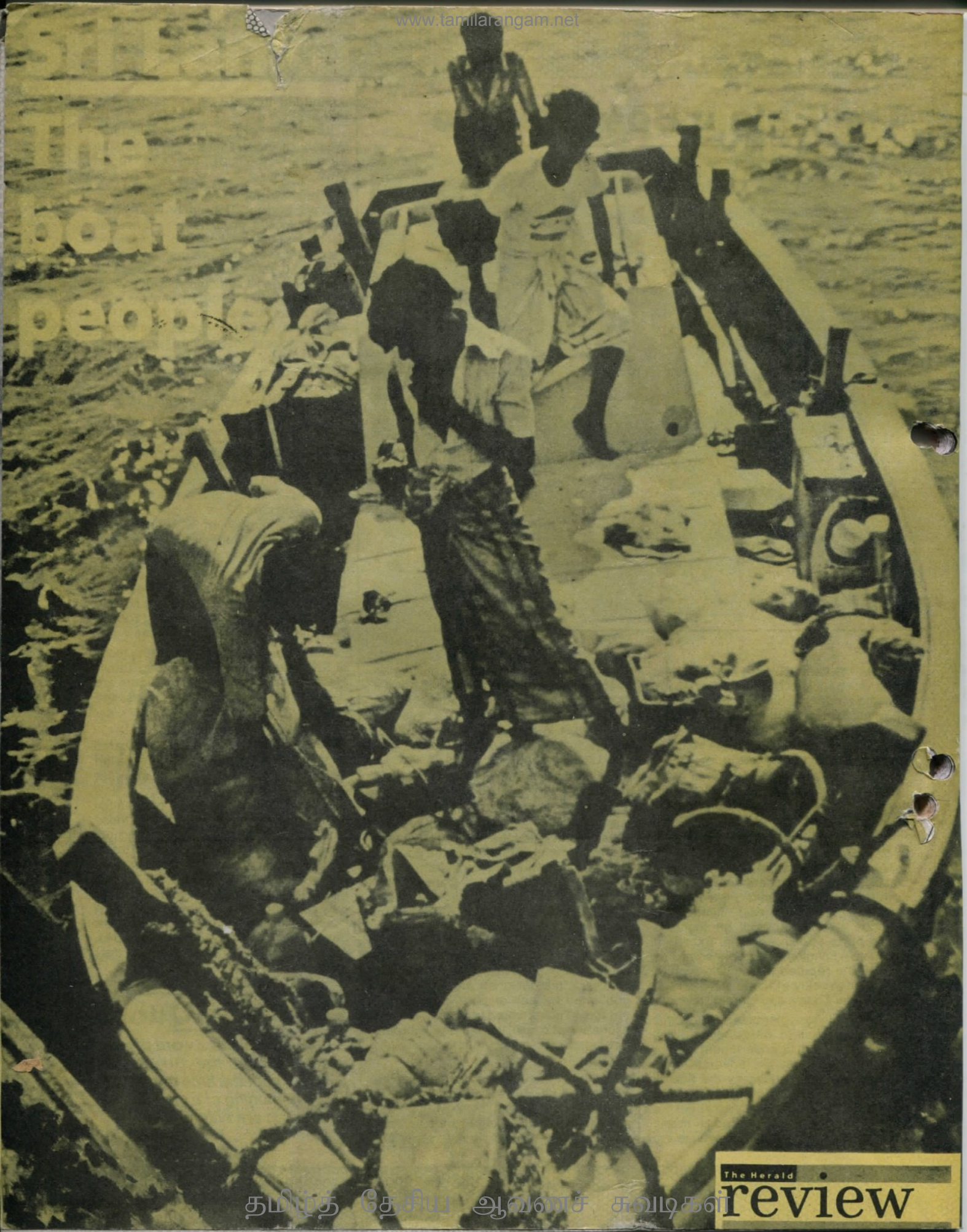

The Herald review

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